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New Statesman

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SHORT STORY

31 January 1986 80p IR£1.28 US$1.50 By Air

JULIA LANGDON: Thatcher after Westlandgate

RUPERT MURDOCH'S Wapping greed

HENRY JACKSON: President Marcos's last stand

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The first of the vaccines and the last of the Mohicans.

In the year 1800, a US presidential candidate named Thomas Jefferson explained to Chief Little Turtle and his warriors that "the Great Spirit had made a gift to the white man in showing them how to preserve themselves from the smallpox."

And so, during a visit to Washington D.C., the last of the Mohicans were duly inoculated against the disease which had been responsible for wiping out more Indian tribes than the white men themselves.

The vaccine used owed much of its origins to a Dorset farmer by the name of Benjamin Jesty. He knew of the folk belief that an attack of cowpox gave protection from smallpox and, in 1774, he saw the proof of this during a severe outbreak of the disease in his local village.

Two of his milkmaids had caught cowpox on their hands by milking cows with infected udders and had nursed their families through smallpox without catching the dreaded disease themselves.

Jesty had already had cowpox, but his wife and their two children had not. Concerned for their safety, he scratched their forearms with a 'stocking needle' and inserted the cowpox virus from the sores on the infected cows' udders. Although the Jesty family were not immune from the resulting scandal of this 'experiment', they never caught smallpox.

But the real breakthrough came some twenty years later in 1796 when Edward Jenner, an English country doctor, made the first scientific approach to the subject of immunisation.

His experiments proved the value of cowpox inoculation and the potential of artificial transmission. Not from cow to human, but from human to human, producing only a small sore at the site of inoculation and very little evidence of disease.

The now familiar name 'vaccine' was born, derived from the latin name for cowpox, 'vaccinia' (from the latin, 'vacca', a cow).

Jenner's vaccination techniques spread across the world faster than the disease itself. Napoleon had his troops vaccinated with "le vaccin jennerien" and, in honouring Jenner, was reported to have said that "he could refuse him absolutely nothing."

In Russia, the first child to be vaccinated was given the name 'Vaccinof'. Many countries made vaccination compulsory. And the newly elected President Jefferson of the USA said in a tribute to Jenner, "Future nations will know by history only that the loathsome smallpox has existed and by you has been extirpated."

Prophetic words indeed. In 1980, the World Health Assembly officially declared that smallpox had been completely eradicated from the planet.

But the battle to rid the world of other diseases is still being fought. Especially in the developing countries.

The pharmaceutical industry supplies the bulk of the vaccines currently used in the World Health Organization's programme to provide immunisation for every child in the world against diphtheria, whooping cough, tetanus, measles, poliomyelitis and tuberculosis by the year 1990.

The small number of research based companies that develop and produce these vaccines are also trying to assist the less industrialised nations by producing more heat-stable products, improving distribution facilities and providing local training.

And for the future, although vaccines do not enjoy adequate patent protection, the industry is using all the recent advances in biotechnology to develop radically new immunising techniques.

Effective protection against diseases like malaria and leprosy should soon be introduced, and vaccines against other tropical diseases may well follow.

Without adequate investment, this enormous effort would not be possible.

And the people of other nations would not be so lucky as the last of the Mohicans.

If you'd like further information about the British Pharmaceutical Industry, write to: Dr. John Griffin, The ABPI, 12 Whitehall, London SW1 2DY.

abpi

The Association of the British Pharmaceutical Industry.

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New Statesman

Vol 111 No 2862 31 January 1986

Kenneth Baker kicks rates into touch

THE MOST celebrated occasion on which a Conservative government tried to introduce a 'community charge' (a.k.a. poll tax) was in 1380. It led directly to Wat Tyler and the Peasants' Revolt.

Kenneth Baker is far too canny and ambitious a politician to get sunk in the morass that reform of local government finance represents. After Westland the Thatcher succession stakes have hotted up intensely. (Douglas Hurd seems to have had a very good Westlands War.)

But Margaret Thatcher, without bothering to understand the impossibly complex detail, has had an obsession about abolishing the domestic rating system since 1974 and anyone accepting the Environment job in her Cabinet has to seem to be serious about abolishing rates. Baker has done what any politician with nous would do in such circumstances — pick up the ball, run with it a little way and then give it a long, strong kick into touch.

She Who Must Be Obeyed can then no longer complain about inaction, for a Green Paper containing the most radical of suggestions has been published. (Pathetic old Patrick Jenkin and dithering old Willie Whitelaw said it couldn't be done.) But equally nothing will happen until after the next election and by then who knows what the situation will be. Mrs Thatcher will probably not be Prime Minister. K. Baker certainly won't be at the DoE.

On one point there can be general agreement — local government finance is in an intolerable mess. The fact that the mess is almost entirely of central government's making is worth noting, but does not solve the problem. And it is true that the essential link between local political accountability and local government finance has been broken. Since the mid-1970s, about two thirds of what local government nominally spends and controls comes from central government — more if you add in the DHSS's indirect contribution via rate rebates for the poor.

That is the only point, though, on which there can be agreement. The proposed poll tax is a political and economic monstrosity. Over 20 years ago the 24th Amendment to the American constitution effectively banned it on the ground that civic rights should not be linked to the taxation system. Now the Green Paper proposes to make non-registration for the poll tax into a criminal offence. Do we not already have enough criminal offences? Will we be adding another army of snoopers to the Whitehall payroll?

And in order to dodge the easy criticism that the right to vote is dependent on the payment of the poll tax, the Green Paper is solemly proposing a second, entirely separate register alongside the existing electoral register. Has anyone in the Department of the Environment given a moment's thought to the civil liberty implications of a compulsory, computer-based residence register; or to the bureaucratic load and expense that would be placed on local government to keep such a register up to date?

If the rhetoric that comes from central government about the importance of independent and accountable local government has *any* substance, then local authorities must be free to do things that central government doesn't like. This government insists on controlling capital and current expenditure down to the last penny, introduces legislation to stop local authorities acting politically (expressly on the grounds that politics has no place in local government) and abolishes (at great expense) authorities that still have the temerity to stand up to it.

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There is no easy or perfect solution to the present muddle on local government finance — or it would by now have been proposed. A poll tax, quite apart from the political objections to it is unacceptable because it is an entirely regressive tax, falling relatively heaviest on those least well off. Local income tax is in principle at least a progressive tax, but it falls only on those who choose to declare income in the United Kingdom.

The more you look at the disadvantages of the alternatives, the stronger looks the case for retaining the essential rating system. There is no reason why in a range of taxes and imposts — direct tax, capital tax, VAT, social security contributions — there should not be a continuing place for a property tax. Owners of property after all in general derive substantial financial benefit from it.

The reform of the rating system and of local government finance then boils down to a decision about the right amount that should be raised in this way as against other forms of tax and about how local government finance and expenditure can be arranged so as to present genuine local choices on which local authorities make genuine discretionary choices for which they would then be accountable to their electorates.

The Baker Green Paper addresses itself to none of those issues. It is simply a vindictive political attack on those who won't do what they are told. □

Time to put a stop to Rupert Murdoch

WE SAID on 10 January, just days before Murdoch moved Fleet Street to Wapping, that a Cabinet and a country capable of getting into an uproar over whether a Connecticut manufacturer should be allowed to bail out our slender helicopter capacity seemed, and still seems, not to give a damn about foreign control of our newspapers.

It isn't 'Little Englandism' to repeat that this is a cultural disaster to which Trade and Industry spokespersons on all sides of the House should start paying serious attention. To be precise, to which Opposition parties should pay serious attention. For while a Tory government of a different complexion to the present one might care for the integrity of the country's primary reading material, Mrs Thatcher is too servile to America and too besotted with news-manipulation herself to mind, or probably even to understand, what is going on.

In escalating order, from the almost laughable to the really threatening: the *Mail* and *Mail On Sunday* are ultimately answerable to a proprietor, Lord Rothermere, who chooses to live in Paris; the *Daily* and *Sunday Telegraph* have recently fallen into the hands of a Canadian businessman widely loathed in his own country before he ever got here; the oldest Sunday, the *Observer*, belonged briefly to American oil in the shape of Atlantic Richfield, and given Lonhro's recurrent public dissatisfactions with it could at another turn of the wheel go back into American hands.

And there is the Murdoch empire. In an entirely cynical operation designed to get round US restrictions on *foreign ownership of media*, Murdoch last year ceased to be an Australian national, and became a naturalised American. It cannot be sufficiently stressed that though Murdoch belongs to where the money's to be made, and is no more a Staten Island immigrant to the 'Land of the Free' than Christopher Columbus seeking the wealth of the Indies was, he is lawfully an American. *The Times*, the *Sunday Times*, the *News of the World* and the *Sun* are enterprises run by British staffs for an American boss.

The print unions are only the most visible of those who are on the front line of that truth, as American labour contracts are forced on newspaper production. Almost unnaturally *in*visible, as the Cabinet crisis and the space-shuttle disaster have successively flooded the headlines, has been the anguish of Murdoch's journalists. Within weeks of a state memorial service at St Paul's for a dead editor of *The Times* we discover that the new editor, Charles Wilson, has been engaged in preparing a new Murdoch publication, the *Post*, at the Wapping plant, which bears every sign — we shall see — of a deception, disguising the plant's purposes.

Thirty *Sunday Times* journalists, as we go to press, find they can't stomach the behaviour of their management and are endeavouring to work at the Gray's Inn Road premises which their fellows, on principle or under pressure or for the cash inducements, have quitted for Wapping. A great deal of nonsense is talked about fearless reporting and outspoken free comment — from a 'Fleet Street' repressive of ethnic, women's and gay voices — but it is nonetheless true that from Murdoch's 'pioneering' with the *Sun* through to his take-over of *The Times* and the *Sunday Times* we have witnessed a constant decline in the self-regard of those who write for him, and a gravitational downward pull on all who write for those in competition with him. He is killing the pride that journalists must feel in the *purposes* for which they work.

As if these alone were not questions which ought to force themselves on the attention of those media which still lie outside Murdoch's direct influence — principally TV — there is the trifling circumstance (*as we describe on p12*) that even at this height of the Wapping imbroglio Murdoch is trying to capture direct satellite TV broadcasting into the UK. Look at it for a moment from his point of view: the dozy British, with their ludicrous Monopolies Commission, their laughing-stock departments of Trade and Industry (first Parkinson, then Brittan), their silly Press Council, their supine reliance on 'independent' boards (*viz* the BBC and *The Times*), their Whitehall and Parliamentary dislike of the media, are ripe for plucking. It can't go on for ever, but it's a pushover for now. And it all feeds Murdoch's empire-building in America, where the over-riding ambitions lie.

Generations of unimpressive press barons who *were* domiciled in the UK have accustomed this country to take the worst for granted in 'Fleet Street' ownership. Lord Hartwell at the *Telegraph* has just botched it, losing control almost by inadvertence. Robert Maxwell of the *Mirror* group (there too, who has ultimate control is a mystery buried in Liechtenstein) comes across as a Beaverbrook-like self-publicist. But the joke's over now. 'Hack', which was once a term abusive enough to support a libel action, is drawing close to being an accurate description of people at the highest levels of British journalism, as the BBC runs scared before government and Murdoch's journalists are offered 'inducements' to continue serving his trans-Atlantic pretensions. They don't want to be hacks. They're becoming as helpless in employment as the printers are becoming *out* of employment.

Remedies? The so-called independent directors of *The Times* should meet now to ask for clarification of the new editor's recent activities, or they should do the unheard-of: the decent thing. That is, resign. But that's the least of what should happen this February. The dozy British should wake up in the only forum open to us: Parliament.

The SDP tell us they have no policy on the control of the print media. The Liberals want to restrict any one company from holding a controlling interest in more than one daily and one Sunday paper (they're right) and mandatory independent boards on every national paper (phooey). *Labour's Programme '82* had a milk-and-water promise about encouraging the opportunities for new newspapers. Eddie Shah is doing that without encouragement.

Macaulay in the 19th century called the press 'the Fourth Estate'. In unholy alliance, neither governments (anywhere) nor international businessmen (anywhere) like that in its full-blown constitutional reality. Is there anyone, or any party, in the Commons who can now see that it is becoming a prime order of business for a free society in Britain that legislation be promised from the first non-Thatcher administration to enforce local British control of our principal newspapers? A three to five year period for disinvestment by all means. The time has come for someone to blow the whistle. □

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NOW BRITISH RAIL OUT-SERPELLS SERPELL

Tony Pugh

These little mountain trains are so tiresome. Now if it was a Channel tunnel . . .

FLUSHED with its success in routing the rail unions in last year's strike ballot, BR is pushing ahead with plans to cut back the rail network away from the South East. As IAN WILLIAMS reports, it seems confident that it can over-ride union opposition

BR are 'single-lining' the double tracked line between Wrexham and Chester — a move which some seen as a prelude to closing it down altogether. They tried to go ahead with the project last year, but withdrew in the face of union and political pressure.

In proceeding now they are going even beyond the recommendations of the Serpell Report of 1983 which was so anti-rail that not even the Tories felt able to endorse it. Serpell proposed that lines with below 10,000 train movements a year should be considered for singling. This line has almost 15,000 movements.

The effect of singling a line is that trains have to wait at one end until any train coming in the opposite direction have come out. (Several accidents testify that this isn't always true.) The effect of course is both to pass on and multiply delays. Interestingly, the money for this operation is BR's share of helping the Welsh office cut costs on the building of the Manchester to Swansea trunk road which poses direct competition to the deteriorating Welsh railway system. BR, it has been learned, approached the Welsh Office offering singling of the line in return for £300,000 from the savings on building narrower bridges over the rail track for the four lane dual carriageway.

Unwarranted zeal

BR claims that the track was due for renewal in two years anyway. But there is a feeling among local railway workers that it's indicative of the Board's 'drier than thou' ambitions towards the cabinet in producing unsolicited reductions in the Public Service Obligation grant (PSO) from the Treasury for provincial services. Hitherto the PSO has been regarded as the government's part of the 'contract' with BR to maintain socially needed by unprofitable services.

Wrexham MP Dr John Marek considers that the service will deteriorate so badly that BR will be proposing to close it completely in five years because of the customers it will have lost. Despite being sponsored by the National Union of Railwaymen he went by car from Wrexham to the House of Commons this Monday for the emergency debate. 'It's too important to risk the train service,' he said, pointing to the one-third of inter-city trains between Wrexham and London which were over 20 minutes late even before the single lining. 'We're trying to attract firms to invest in an unemployment blackspot but there's no way I could recommend potential investors coming here by train,' he commented — still feeling guilty at driving to London. ●

Council binds successors to its policies

A TORY-CONTROLLED council is putting an empty block of 32 flats on sale with a legal guarantee that another 340 flats on the estate, half of which are currently tenanted, will be sold into owner occupation.

Hammersmith and Fulham has been preparing the sale of one of its largest estates, Fulham Court, for the past three years. One block is now vacant and the council is trying to sell it with an extraordinary covenant in the lease which guarantees that none of the flats on the estate will ever be rented again.

The council first offered the block to the local Addison housing association for conversion and sale as a 'low cost home ownership scheme' but on discovering the covenant the association withdrew earlier this month.

The council is now looking for other buyers. Committee chair Peter Prince tells the *NS*: 'We would prefer it to go to a non profit maximising organisation but we are now ready to sell it to anyone who agrees to our conditions.' As well as the restricted covenant, the council is seeking 50 per cent nomination rights for any prospective purchaser so that its existing tenants can have preferential treatment. However, even Addison had costed out its cheapest flats after conversion at £42,000.

Since 1978, the council has been hung, with two Alliance councillors holding the balance of power. But Labour is the biggest party and confidently expects to win control in May. A parliamentary by-election is also pending in Fulham. Labour candidate Nick Raynsford, the director of SHAC, the London Housing Aid Centre tells the *NS*: 'There is no justification for this covenant except to bind a future Labour council to a Tory policy. With 150 homeless families in bed and breakfast waiting for rehousing, all available housing should be for renting to people in urgent need.'

Mr Prince denied that he was pre-empting future council decisions: 'We're doing it to protect both the buyers' and our investment. We've lost a lot of rent income by having to let the flats go empty.'

Since some of the tenants are resisting the move, (*NS* 30 August 1985), the council is having to wait for the housing and planning bill introduced in parliament last week to be passed before it can clear everyone off the estate. The new bill will give councils the power to evict tenants to empty estates for selling to private builders for conversion and resale.

Christian Wolmar

Christian Wolmar writes for the Observer

How the Czechs banned aid to Ethiopia

THE CZECHOSLOVAK authorities are harassing musicians who, following the example of Bob Geldof's Band Aid, produced a tape cassette to help the starving in Ethiopia, according to a report in the Prague samizdat periodical Information on Charter 77. *The report is contained in issue no 2/86 published 27 January and distributed in the West by the London-based Palach press agency.*

Early last autumn the Young Music Section (YMS) of the Union of Musicians produced a 'Tape for Africa' with songs of Czech composers and singers. Proceeds of the sale were to be given to Ethiopia and the Ethiopian embassy was duly informed. YMS received support from the Nobel Prize laureate, the late Jaroslav Seifert, who offered one of his poems to be put to music for the tape.

However, shortly after the YMS circulated information to its 12,000 members, the Czechoslovak authorities intervened. The post office was ordered to close immediately the YMS post office box and to return all contributions and cassette orders to senders. YMS itself, along with the better known Jazz Section of the Union of Musicians, now faces dissolution.

The YMS also issued colourful badges to promote humanitarian aid for Africa, but their sale has encountered similar official obstruction. The Czechoslovak Ministry for Foreign Affairs contacted the Ethiopian embassy and 'recommended' that it cease all contacts with the YMS forthwith. It is not clear what will happen to the money YMS raised before the clampdown.

The Czechoslovak mass media, has frequently criticised the West for not helping the Ethiopians sufficiently. The report in Information on Charter 77 *argues that the steps taken by the authorities are further proof that the regime fears all forms of independent cultural activity and self-expression. The sincere desire of many young people to help those in the third world, it says, had to be thwarted because 'the officially-declared solidarity is acceptable only if it is at the same time officially organised and controlled.'*

Jan Kavan

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Labour fails to capitalise on Scots Tory collapse . . .

LABOUR MPs in Scotland are worried that the dramatic collapse in the Tory vote north of the border could have alarming consequences for Labour's performance at the next general election. They fear that as many as 11 Labour seats might be vulnerable to the Liberal/Social Democratic Alliance should Tory voters abandon their traditional loyalties.

Support for the Tories, according to the most recent opinion poll conducted by System Three at the beginning of the month, is running as low as 15 per cent in Scotland. The party has even managed to compound the Thatcher government's Westland crisis by displaying an embarrassing disarray over the decision to close the Gartcosh steel mill in Strathclyde.

Certainly one and possibly two Conservative constituency organisations are threatening to wind themselves up in despair. Membership renewals are said to be falling and some prominent constituency officials are openly talking of joining the Scottish National Party (SNP). Two respected MPs, Hector Munro (Dumfries) and Anna McCurley (Renfrew West and Inverclyde), last week joined the opposition in the House of Commons to vote against the Gartcosh closure.

Steve McTaggart/IFL

Gartcosh never really helped Labour

Gartcosh has in fact become uniquely symbolic of Scottish politics in the mid 1980s. The vigorous all-party campaign to keep it open characterised a distinctive resurgence of nationalist sentiment — by no means the same as support for the SNP. Last Friday's vote by the workforce to accept defeat and start negotiating redundancy terms highlights the perceived powerlessness of Labour's huge Scottish majority.

The SNP of course hopes that it rather than Labour or the Alliance will reap the rewards of Tory decay. A spokesperson pointed out, however, that the System Three opinion poll suggested that both Labour and the SNP would in fact benefit substantially, gaining respectively eleven and six seats, while the Alliance would make just one net gain.

Even more encouraging from the SNP's point of view is its analysis of the 19 local government by-elections which it has contested since April last year. Its share of the vote averages out at 26 per cent, nearly 9 points higher than previously. In the most recent two by-elections in West Lothian and Motherwell, the SNP surprised even itself by overturning two large Labour majorities and winning the seats.

On the same analysis, Labour's share of the vote is 36 per cent, nearly six points down on earlier performances, while the Tories are running eight points down at 17 per cent. The Alliance is up five points at 17 per cent.

Rob Edwards

. . . and in London, gets little from GLC abolition

ACCORDING TO the received wisdom, the anti-abolition campaign mounted by the GLC caused a substantial increase in Labour's popularity in the capital. This has created a hope that Labour might be able to reap large electoral dividends in the borough elections in May and would appear to augur well for the Fulham by-election.

In fact, this looks like wishful thinking. It is disputable whether the pro-Labour effect of the GLC's campaign ever worked its way through into by-election results, even though numerous London-wide opinion polls carried out during the campaign strongly suggested that Labour was benefiting from it. During 1984, when the campaign was at its height, borough by-election results showed Labour doing no better than would have been expected from *national* opinion polls. In fact, Labour may even have *underperformed* in by-election results in 1984 compared with expectations from its national standing.

The seven publicly available opinion poll results for London in 1984 give an average result of: Labour, 44 per cent; Conservative, 34 per cent; Alliance, 19 per cent. The shift in support since the 1982 borough election that this represents is: Labour, up 13 points; Conservative, down 9 points; Alliance, down 6 points. By contrast, by-election results show Labour up only 6 points, the Conservatives down 9 points (the 'correct' results) and the Alliance *up* 3 points. Labour declined in 1985, but it is fruitless to debate whether or not the momentum created by GLC abolition declined, since it was conspicuously absent from by-election results in the first place.

Publicly discussed simulations of London borough council election outcomes using the opinion poll figures have raised the possibility of quite dramatic gains in the May elections this year, with Labour controlling perhaps 22 of the 32 boroughs. However, simulations from suitable by-election results from the last half of 1985 predict a more modest forecast. A projection using a Labour gain of 3.7 points, a Conservative loss of 10.5 points and an Alliance gain of 6.5 points, gives the following results: Labour gains Brent, Ealing, Hammersmith and Fulham, Waltham Forest and Wandsworth. The Alliance gains Sutton and keeps control of Richmond-upon-Thames; Havering and Hillingdon probably have hung councils. This means Labour controlling 17 councils as against the present 12, while the Tories have 11 instead of 16. No really dramatic inroads by Labour there.

Flatfooted campaigning

What then is the true state of Labour's support in the capital? Have the by-election results been affected by Labour's traditional flatfootedness in running by-election campaigns? Or are Labour councils not really very popular with their residents, thus contributing to a lack of enthusiasm for the party as a whole? There is some evidence for both possibilities. Or perhaps the London-wide polls taken in 1984 and early 1985 produced inflated figures of Labour support because most were conducted within studies whose primary support was to ascertain attitudes towards the GLC.

The forthcoming by-election in Fulham will provide another guide to Labour's popularity in London. Fulham, needing a 6.1 per cent Conservative to Labour swing, is a seat that Labour really must win if it is to form the next government. On the basis of recent London-wide poll figures Labour would win by a landslide. But recent by-election results predict a much closer contest, with any Labour victory being largely due to the collapse of the Tory vote to the Alliance.

Chris Husbands

Tories slide over Westland in the poll that really counts

THE SMART MONEY is switching from Conservatives to Labour to be the largest party after the next election, according to our regular opionion poll of the bookmakers. The Tories have dropped 3 percentage points since our last Index (*NS* 18 October 1985,) but have lost 6 points since the Westland Affair began, wiping out a three-point gain towards the end of last year.

Mrs Thatcher's loss has been purely Labour's gain, as the Liberal/SDP Alliance have recently been marked down by Coral as rank outsiders at 12-1. Coral also offer the best odds for those wishing to bet on Labour winning the most seats (5-4). If you must bet on the Tories, go to William Hill at 10-11 on.

In the past, we've excluded Coral from our calculations, because we hadn't succeeded in putting any money on their heavily pro-Tory odds (ie good odds for those wanting to bet on Labour). We now have, although their odds have since moved more in line with the others. The main Index below now includes all three national bookmakers who quote odds on the next election, and the comparison is with figures *on the same basis* for October. If we excluded Coral again, the figures would be Tories 47, Labour 42, Alliance 11.

Odds won't be available on the Fulham by-election until the date is announced, but Labour's Nick Raynsford seems to be early favourite, probably at 5-4 or evens, with the Tories adrift at 3 or 4 to 1.

NS tick-tack Index

	Score	Change since 18 Oct
Con	49	−5
Lab	41	+7
Lib/SDP	10	−1

The 'score' is the percentage 'probability' of each party winning the greatest number of seats at the next general election, based on the odds quoted by Ladbroke, William Hill and Coral. We turned these into percentages (eg evens = 50%), rounded them down to add up to 100%, and took the average, which doesn't add up to 100% because of rounding.

John Rentoul

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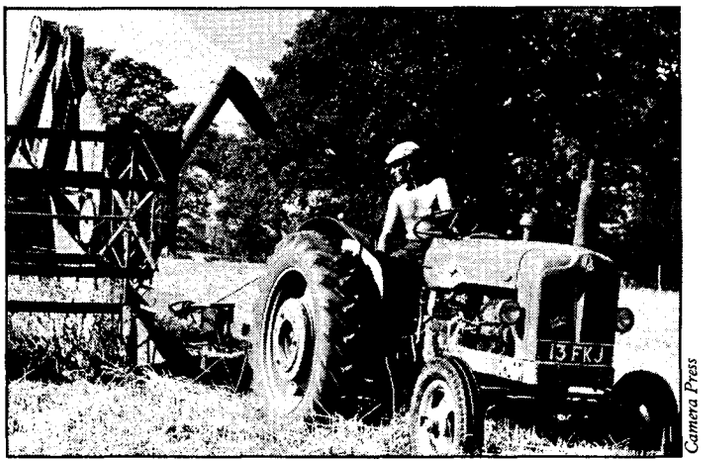

Camera Press

Farmworkers in line for peanuts — again

FARMWORKERS preparing for this year's round of pay negotiations are pessimistic. They fear that the 43 per cent decrease in farm incomes reported in the annual review of agriculture white paper last week will be used to refuse any substantial increase.

Last year the Agricultural Wages Board (AWB) awarded farmworkers a minimum wage of £89.70 for a 40 hour week. The Agricultural and Allied Workers Trade Group of the TGWU sits down to the negotiating table on 10 and 11 March, and expects the 43 per cent drop to be used to argue that farmers are so poor that wages must be kept low. Other figures likely to be seized on are that farm incomes in 1985 were the lowest, in real terms, since 1973 — the year Britain joined the EEC. In cash terms, incomes are allegedly down to their 1979-80 levels. Farmers' bank borrowings have also increased, according to the white paper. A 12 per cent increase in 1984, followed by a further 5 per cent in 1985 has left farmers with a debt to the banks of more than £5.5 billion.

Distinctions ignored

But the white paper overlooks an important distinction in its presentation of farm incomes between the incomes of labour-employing farmers and those of non-labour employing farmers. In 1984 only 22 per cent of farmers employed workers on a regular basis. But those farmers had an income of £1.5 billion — 75 per cent of the entire income for the industry. The white paper didn't mention this. It's the small family farmers who have suffered most from last year's poor weather and who can't pay back their bank debts.

Crucial to the outcome of the discussions will be the AWB's five independent members. Unless they acknowledge the distinction — conveniently blurred by the white paper — between different sorts of farmers, farmworkers will remain among the worst paid employees in the country.

Renée Danziger

Union fear over atomic safety research

TRADE UNIONISTS within the UK Atomic Energy Authority (UKAEA) are worried that Government plans to 'commercialise' the authority could damage research on nuclear safety.

A bill aimed at converting the UKAEA from an organisation supported by government grant to one that operates as a 'trading fund' was introduced into the House of Commons last week. From April this year the UKAEA will be obliged to fund its work by contracts from customers like British Nuclear Fuels plc and the CEGB instead of being subsidised through parliament. It is not being privatised, but it is being pushed in that direction.

The Society of Civil and Public Servants (SCPS), supported by other civil service unions, has been unsuccessfully trying to amend the bill in the House of Lords to try and prevent safety and other basic research work from being compromised by commercial pressures. A spokesperson for the SPCS's UKAEA co-ordinating committee, Greg Kasker, pointed out that in the past the CEBG has been reluctant to support research on advanced gas cooled reactors which the authority thought was important.

The legislation is the result of a Government review of the UKAEA conducted, according to Mr Kaser, in an 'entirely secret' way. The SPCS is anxious that the UKAEA should become more open. It is also urging that the authority's remit should be broadened to cover research into all forms of energy including renewable sources.

Rob Edwards

MISCELLANY

Ms Bowe — the truth

Ms Colette 'ask number ten press office' Bowe, Leon Brittan's erstwhile placer of information within the public domain, has, according to the *Guardian*, a 'double first in economics'. The *Sun* says 'she took a degree in economics at Oxford.' The *Mail* goes further, and claims that 'she gained an economics doctorate from Oxford.' Oxford itself, when asked by Miscellany, says, in a puzzled voice: 'We can't find her in our records at all . . . as far as we can see she wasn't here.' Queen Mary College, London University, says: 'I really don't know where the Oxford story came from. She was an undergraduate here from 1966-69, gaining an upper second in economics, and from 1973-76 when she took a PhD.' Neither, of course, is she the first woman to head an important government information department, as the *Guardian* originally claimed. But they've already come clean about that, so we can't mention it.

Strange but true

Star Wars, you might not know, was on the agenda of the US Defense Department long before Ronald Reagan became its most vocal advocate. In December 1948, six months before the Soviet Union developed the atomic bomb, Secretary of Defense James V Forrestal announced that the US High Command was studying the possibilities of establishing a 'Rocket Outpost' in space. Reports at the time speculated that 'the satellite might have the whole world in its bomb sight . . . some scientists believe that the nation which first creates an outer space platform for the guidance of Atomic Warhead rockets will dominate the earth.' Three months later, Forrestal was staying in Hobe Sound, Florida, when a fire siren went off in the middle of the night. He was found running up and down the street shouting: 'The Red Army has landed, the Red Army has landed'. He was flown to the Bethseda Navy Hospital. Maryland, where he received urgent psychiatric care under 24-hour supervision. At 2 am on 22 May 1949, Forrestal slipped his guards and jumped to his death from a 16th floor window. Seven weeks later the Soviets exploded their first atomic bomb and, in the rush to develop the H bomb at all costs, the Defense Department put the idea of a rocket outpost in space onto the back burner until a more suitable time and a more reliable mouthpiece could be found. The rest is history — but there is just one other point. When President Reagan recently underwent surgery to remove colon polyps, it was at the Bethseda Navy Hospital, Maryland. Where the US Defense Department could take extra special care of him.

Strictly for the birds

Now for this week's Good News spot. Life is getting better and better for some — in particular, Cumbrian pigeons roosting near Windscale. They are the latest beneficiaries of British Nuclear Fuels's seemingly limitless largesse. BNFL have just paid out £20,000 (or an 'undisclosed sum' as they would have it) for new luxury landscaped lofts to replace those that have had to be demolished to make way for a new international running track. The track itself is a product of BNFL's munificence — it cost £600,000. Then there's the £350,000 generously donated for the development of a maritime museum near Maryport. And the sponsorship given to the Whitehaven rugby league team. Not to mention the awards BNFL is to give to Whitehaven citizens who produce the most tasteful examples of town housing development. Less fortunate than the pigeons is the widow of one of BNFL's own employees, who died from a radiation-related disease after two years of blindness. She's received £8,000. In a letter to the local paper she described it as the 'booby prize'.

Another *Sun* lie

In the trade, the term 'Sun *exclusive' makes journalists on other papers check their old carbons. But first, credit where it's due. Londoner's Diary in the* Standard *has pointed*

out to us in perfectly civil fashion that last 3 October it noted the then-uncertainty over the Horizon *programme on Aids, about whose effective banning now by the BBC we said in last week's editorial that Fleet St has 'laryngitis'. And now discredit where it's due. The* Sun *dealt with the matter ('too disgusting to be shown') on Friday 24 January, after three other papers had provably publicised the ban, under a five-column headline with the cartouche ANOTHER SUN EXCLUSIVE.*

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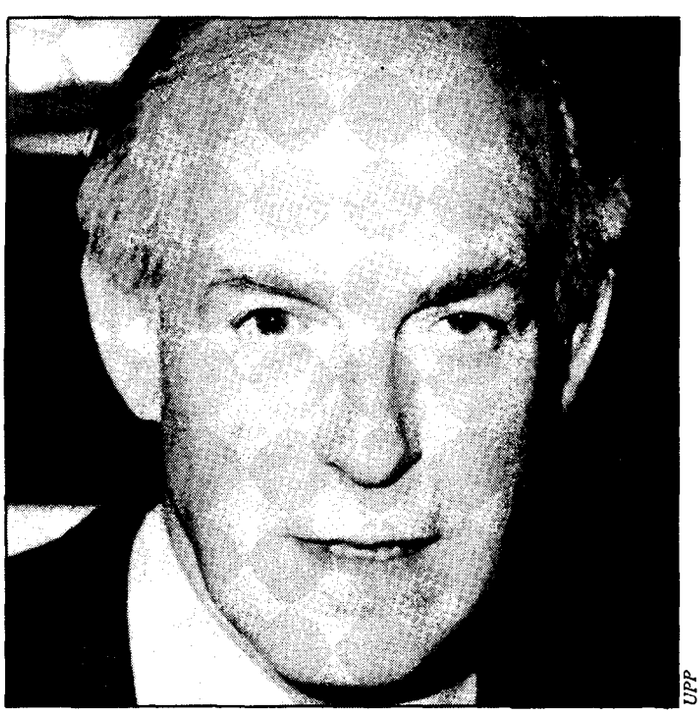
THEY'LL SELL OFF THE AIR WE BREATHE NEXT

Junior environment minister John Patten is about to publish plans for the privatisation of the water industry. WILLIAM JOHNSON reports that quite the silliest state sell-off yet could damage the government as much as the rest of us

THE POINT about water authorities is that they have a responsibility for public health in the supply of clean drinking water and the disposal of sewage. Patten made a spectacular blunder earlier this month when he described privatisation as 'the biggest thing to hit water in this country since the first lead pipe was introduced by the Romans'. According to the Royal Commission on Environmental Pollution in 1983, lead poisoning is one of the greatest public health hazards of Britain's water supplies.

Furthermore, most of the 10 Regional Water Authorities have been hard hit by the lack of investment in their networks (*NS* 10 August 1984, 1 March 1985) and are up to their ears in debt.

Part of the government's motive for selling off the water industry derives from the painful experience of the successful water workers' strike in 1983. The National Water Council, which was responsible for national co-ordination (and therefore responsible for giving in to the workers' demands) was swiftly abolished. The link of democratic accountability between water authorities and local councils was dissolved and replaced by paid chairpersons and small boards appointed directly by the Secretary of State for the Environment. The CBI was given representation on 9 of the 10 authorities, and all but the Welsh Water Authority promptly elected to meet in secret.



UPP

Roy Watts, Thames Water boss, last year played consumers' friend in the 'tax on toilets' row over the government-imposed water rate rise — winning the 'freedom' to run Thames as a business and borrow on the open market

By late 1984 Ian Gow (John Patten's predecessor) had launched a joint Environment Department-water industry study of the feasibility of water metering for all households, a vital pre-requisite for privatisation. The study was headed by Roy Watts, the new chairperson of Thames Water, then more widely known for axing 20,000 jobs as managing director and deputy chairperson of British Airways.

John Patten's privatisation white paper has to deal with another basic problem. As in the case of the Trustee Savings Bank, there is some doubt about who owns the assets to be privatised. When they were created by the 1973 Water Act, the water authorities merely 'adopted' a range of local council facilities. So the government will have to nationalise the water industry to sell it off.

What's more, the campaign against the privatisation of water is more soundly based than most trade union campaigns. The principal unions, GMB, NUPE and NALGO, aren't basing their fight against privatisation on 'jobs and services' (important as these are). Together with Greenpeace and the Socialist Environment and Resources Association (Labour's 'green' pressure group), they are calling for renewal of the water and sewage mains, protection of public health and the environment, and local democratic control.

The unions have published *Public Ownership: A Watertight Case**, which contains some of the most progressive trade union policy on ecology since the National Union of Seafarers blocked nuclear waste dumping at sea.

Outside the formal campaign, several dissenting voices have also been raised. The National Consumer Council and the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds are worried, and the National Farmers' Union has 'considerable reservations' about the feasibility of privatisation.

As the government has admitted, water privatisation presents one of the greatest challenges in its legislative programme. Watch this space. ●

* Price £1 from Alan Jackson, NALGO, 1 Mabledon Place, London WC1H 9AJ.

History of a lie

THAMES TV has backed journalist Julian Manyon, whose *TV Eye* programme in 1981, based on a lie, was used against seven Czech dissidents imprisoned by the authorities for up to a year.

In June 1981 *TV Eye* broadcast a programme on Czech dissidents which incurred the wrath of two London-based Czechs who had helped make the programme. They argued that dangerous and untrue statements had been injected into the film to make it more sensational. The most damaging of these was the claim by Manyon that two French tourists, arrested on their way into Czechoslovakia, were carrying a list of names and addresses of people inside the country. The programme was later used by the Czech authorities against leading dissidents.

The London Czechs immediately lodged a complaint with the then newly-formed Broadcasting Complaints Commission (BCC). Three months later, the *Sunday Times* published a story asserting that not only had the film lied but that the falsehoods were maintained in submissions to the BCC.

Thames responded by suing the *Sunday Times* for libel and went to the High Court to get the BCC hearing postponed. In 1984, Thames withdrew from the libel suit and an extraordinary statement was negotiated for publication by the *Sunday Times*. It said: 'Our concern was to demonstrate that a television programme was broadcast by Thames containing deliberate and in our view dangerous falsehoods which significantly worsened the plight of the dissidents inside Czechoslovakia . . . we do however accept that Thames management did not knowingly put out a programme containing lies.' Thames paid £60,000 towards the paper's costs. And still Thames refused to discipline Manyon or anyone else involved in the programme (*NS* 23 March 1984).

But at last the way was cleared for the BCC hearing. Last November, four and a half years after the programme, the BCC published its judgment: three of the five complaints were upheld including the fact — and this is stated quite categorically — that the BCC did not believe a list had ever existed.

Staff at *TV Eye* have been in uproar fearing that the integrity of the whole programme is at stake. The five researchers and one of the producers are refusing to work with Manyon. But last week, after months of indecision, Manyon was put back to work — doing his own research on a programme about Rupert Murdoch.

Thames executives have stood by Manyon since the beginning and 'off the record' say they withdrew from the *Sunday Times* libel action only because their corroborative witness for the story about the list has now left the company.

Compare this with the treatment of the two BBC journalists who through their programme *Rough Justice* helped bring about the release of Anthony Mycock, wrongfully jailed for two and a half years for burglary. They were suspended without pay for three months and banned from investigative journalism for two years.

As Phillip Whitehead, ex-editor of *TV Eye*, said last week: 'The belief that you can play fast and loose with the facts purely to jazz up a story is very serious indeed. I would have though that any current affairs programme that had said about it what was said by the BCC was in need of a major clean-up'.

Elaine Potter

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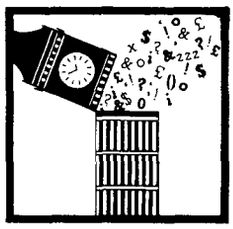

The truth, the half-truth and nothing like the truth

HUGH STEPHENSON

WHEN A SHIP 'weathers a storm' it is pleased to have survived, but has usually suffered internal as well as superficial damage. And so it has been with Mrs Thatcher's Westland affair. Her claim that no one told her — before, during or after the event — of the decision to leak selective parts of the Solicitor General's letter to Michael Heseltine to the Press Association is so improbable that it must be true — a vindication of the cock-up as against the conspiracy theory of history. (Monday's revised version of events, however, still conflicts with what she said on 23 January: '. . . it was vital to have correct information in the public domain. It was to get the information in the public domain, I gave my consent.)

In all the huffing and puffing, though, not enough attention has been paid to the evidence that there must have been a second leak — about the leak enquiry itself. For while Mrs Thatcher's objectively implausible account of how the original leak was planned may be literally true, her account of how the official enquiry by the Cabinet Secretary into that leak was set up and conducted takes us into quite different realms of implausibility.

The Solicitor General, not knowing at that stage that all along his letter was intended for use by the dirty tricks department, obviously wanted an enquiry. But, given that the full facts were already known to the Prime Minister's Private Secretary and to her Press Secretary and confirmable with one telephone call to the Department of Trade and Industry, it is inconceivable that these officials, who see her every day and through whom she conducts her business, could have allowed her to order a full leak enquiry without saying, between the 'leak' on 6 January and the authorising of the enquiry on 13 January, either to her or to the Cabinet Secretary: 'Excuse me, but we're just going to look silly if we do that, because we already know who authorised the leak.'

If they did not do so, they acted in a grossly irresponsible way and should be fired for having brought the Prime Minister into odium and contempt and for having ruined Leon Brittan's career.

The *only* explanation that fits the facts is that the leak enquiry was originally intended *by someone* as a cover up. The Prime Minister's own words, in retrospect, confirm this. The report of the leak enquiry *would not be published,* she said several times firmly in advance.

What was presumably intended was a return to custom and practice in the pre-Thatcher era — when the bulk of unauthorised leaking was done by ministers and not, as now, by alienated civil servants. Sir Robert Armstrong would have called witnesses and taken statements from all and sundry. And then he would report that his most diligent efforts had failed to discover the source of the leak and the Prime Minister would thank him and say what a shame this was and the Solicitor General would think that honour had been satisfied and Leon Brittan would carry on and the political correspondent of the PA would continue to say that wild horses would not get him to reveal his sources.

But then there must have been a leak. Neil Kinnock's questions to the Prime Minister asking about the leak enquiry seemed even at the time to have a very sure and directed feel to them. Tam Dalyell actually named Ms Colette Bowe of the DTI in advance. No. 10 suddenly had no option. The truth — even if not the whole truth and nothing but the truth — had to come out. The truth, of course, left Leon Brittan, Bernard Ingham and sundry other officials convicted of conspiracy to deceive the Solicitor General and of allowing a full leak enquiry to go its measured way when, again, the honest thing to do would have been to come clean at once.

IT IS A MEASURE, though, of the state to which Mrs Thatcher has brought public affairs that it only takes a half-way plausible account, reluctantly given, of how a confidential legal opinion came to be deliberately leaked by a member of her government, and it is universally taken to be the end of the affair. But before we move on let us just for a moment remind ourselves of what we glimpsed of how things go on behind the scenes after six years of Thatcher government.

Mrs Thatcher has created an entirely new relationship between ministers and civil servants. She dislikes the culture of Whitehall and has said so from the start in no uncertain terms. She does not like the concept of public servants giving impartial and objective advice to ministers, because what she wants is partial and committed support.

The result after six years is that she is now served by people, like Bernard Ingham, who have learned not to tell her what she does not want to hear. When her instincts are right that may not matter. When they are wrong, though, it means that there is no mechanism for warning her, or for presenting the counter-argument effectively.

There was a time when ministers accepted responsibility in public for the actions of the civil servants under them and did not drop them in it in order to save their political necks. Mrs Thatcher has, however, now chosen to say publicly that two sets of civil servants conducted themselves with such professional incompetence as to give rise to a misunderstanding so serious that it shook her government and led directly to Brittan's resignation; and that the chosen method of making the leak was wrong. If the conduct of individual civil servants is to be discussed and criticised in this way in public, it may be a good thing, but it is a constitutional change that needs thinking through.

The Westland Affair also reveals that civil servants are being used in a way that previous convention would have thought improper. The line between a governmental activity and a political activity is, of course, a fine one. This is particularly so for those who work in private offices and as heads of press departments, because they see their ministers constantly, far more regularly than permanent secretaries or senior departmental officials.

Nonetheless there is a line. For example, a press office should certainly defend the reputation of a minister who has made a gaffe in some public speech, but it has no job protecting a minister when the gossip columns are chasing after some extra-marital activity. And in this case Colette Bowe, Bernard Ingham and others have clearly been expected to operate on the wrong side of that line.

No amount of Prime Ministerial cant about the vital importance of getting information of a commercially critical nature into 'the public domain' can obscure the nature of the anti-Heseltine operation that was being mounted. If it was above board a motor-cycle could have taken the *whole* of the letter round to the chairman of Westland and a press release could have been arranged by Bernard Ingham or Ms Bowe and put on the agency wires in the usual way.

The fact is that No. 10 and Leon Brittan, badly rattled by Michael Heseltine, decided to mount a 'dirty trick' operation to damage him *politically*. But at that point, if they are going to play dirty politics, ministers must at least do their own dirty work for themselves. They have political advisers and parliamentary private secretaries for that purpose.

It is a scandal that official information mechanisms should be used in such a way. As we move on from Westland to the 'reform' of the rating system, or whatever piece of Thatcherism comes next, that should be remembered. □

Peter Kellner is on holiday.

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SOONER OR LATER, SOMETHING HAD TO GIVE

It just happened to be Westland. But, reports JULIA LANGDON, Westminster Tories are privately accusing Mrs Thatcher of the gravest — and most unexpected — sin of all: incompetence. They may have closed ranks for the moment, but it won't last forever

'SHE'S JUST like Winston,' mused one right-wing Tory MP this week — 'absolutely hopeless in peacetime.' Thus in eight words he delivered sentence on the party leader he actively helped elect — and on the Prime Minister he now thought should go. 'She won't, of course,' he said, 'and she'll damage the party further by staying put.'

It is hard to imagine on what Mrs Thatcher was basing her confidence when she claimed on Monday, in the closing words of the most critical speech she has ever had to make: 'We shall govern with renewed strength.' That is not what they think in the Conservative Party at Westminster.

The crisis is over. The Conservative Party issues a huge collective sigh of relief: the protagonists have, at last, sat down and shut up; Leon has gone, a necessary sacrifice; Michael has made his peace in public; Margaret is safely tucked up in Downing Street again. Now, for heaven's sake, let's get back to normal.

That is what they are saying in public. That, indeed, is what the Whips Office has sent them out to say. On Monday night they were dutifully queueing up outside the television studios to reassure the anxious electorate. 'Change the focus of attack,' they were told. 'Put Kinnock in the firing line again. Mock his inexperience and verbosity — and, above all, stop going on about our problems.'

There are many who see the whole Westland affair as, if nothing else, a benchmark. It shows, they claim, the beginning of the end of Thatcherism. (Tony Benn claimed rather confusingly in the Commons on Monday night that 'Thatcherism' was a myth. 'People are asking,' he said, 'whether that myth is capable of leading the Conservative Party to victory at the next election.')

But the reality is that the saga of the last few weeks, exciting as it has been in political terms, is merely a symptom of what has gone wrong — and is going wrong — for this government. If it hadn't happened over helicopters, it would have been something else; maybe not for a month or two, or even longer. But something was going to give, sooner or later, for the simple reason that the Conservatives are in a mess.

Let us take, for example, the issue of defence. Poor George Younger has at last got the job he has been after for years. What has he inherited? A commitment to a defence programme that he does not have the budget to finance. He will find himself, like Francis Pym and like John Nott before him, caught in the impossible pincer for a Tory Defence Secretary, between the brass-hats and the back-benchers. It is not possible to justify defence cuts to either the armed services or the party: they just won't have it.

That little spot of trouble is on the back burner at the moment, but it will be coming nicely to the boil. Does anyone think that Michael Heseltine hadn't spotted it?

BUT THERE are other more immediate troubles to hand. There is the small problem of the Budget and the promised tax cuts. The outcome of this year's gathering of Treasury Ministers at Chevening, the Chancellor's country retreat, appears to have been agreement that such cash as may still be available should be used to raise tax threshholds and help the lower paid, rather than reduce the standard rate. That is a victory for those Tories who genuinely and anxiously believe that the government should endeavour to appear caring and compassionate.

Yet what is this? Here we have the Confederation of British Industry telling the Chancellor that any money he might have at his disposal should be used to reduce unemployment. At the same time, John Biffen — respected Cabinet Minister, maverick intellectual — lets it be known that he believes the Budget should be constructed to avoid the pitfalls of over-generous tax concessions. There is a streak of puritanism in the British character, he believes, and people are not impressed by attempts to purchase their good will.

Even nearer at hand is the teachers' strike: a desperately damaging dispute that has been allowed pointlessly to drag on for a whole year. Yet no sooner does the first chink of a settlement appear on the horizon, than Sir Keith Joseph's minders let him out of the padded cell and loose on the airwaves to inform the local authorities that they won't get the cash to pay the bill.

Then there is Norman Fowler's social security review (Mark II). That has already involved an embarrassing climb-down over state earnings-related pensions and is still set to

'No, really, honestly, it was all my fault and I'm terribly, *terribly* sorry'

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UPP

Sir Patrick Mayhew — who takes a very, very, dim view of practically everything

cause considerable political unpopularity. And this week we were back to the question of Rates with a capital 'R': this year's Rate Support Grant has already produced a major Tory revolt, with 32 Conservative MPs, including three ex-Cabinet Ministers, walking through the Labour lobby. Now we have the latest White Paper. Yet most Tory MPs privately believe that all Mrs Thatcher can hope to achieve by reforming the rates is handing the Social Democrats a number of marginal seats without a fight.

The charge that Conservative MPs now lay at the door of Number Ten is incompetence. That is the word on everyone's lips. That is what they blame for the way the Westland affair was allowed to develop as it did. And that is what was exposed when the workings of Mrs Thatcher's administration were laid open for public inspection. According to the official explanation, such events only occurred because of the 'frightful environment' that had been engendered by this crisis. Most Tories really don't understand why there was a crisis at all.

ONE REASON is that the Tory Party has changed. Mrs Thatcher, of course, is largely responsible for that. She has brought into Westminster a new breed of Conservative, she has encouraged them and promoted them. In the 'old' Conservative Party, if a row like this had developed 'someone would have done something'. That would have meant the party grandees. They would have put the Whips out to calm everybody down, Buffs would have been steadied, statements issued from Central Office about the national interest.

Where are the grandees now? Norman Tebbit, had he been available and not in hospital, might have been able to knock some heads together and speak some political common sense, but he scarcely qualifies as a grandee. Jeffrey Archer, mercifully for the party's sake, was not allowed to open his mouth.

One senior and distinguished Conservative, sensing the tension, made a point of spending an hour or two in the Commons Smoking Room at the height of the trouble. He expected to find evidence of attempts, at least, to reassure a worried party that all would soon be well. Instead, nothing. There were no Whips around with a comforting word here and there, no members of the 1922 Executive putting their heads together and thinking of ways they could help. There were no grandees.

There is only one person who might have done the trick. And where, in all this, was Willie? He stood by Mrs Thatcher, of course. He made the necessary noises in the House of Lords when obliged to read out there her incriminating statement last Thursday which was eventually to push Leon Brittan out of the government. There was no doubt, however, that Viscount Whitelaw was extremely sick at heart about the whole business. Sitting in the gallery of the Commons, while Mrs Thatcher spoke on Monday he looked as if he might be going to be ill at any moment.

Mrs Thatcher owes her survival at the top of her party for the last ten-and-a-half years to Willie and she knows it. She knows, too, that he is not going to desert her now. But her problem is that in today's modern, meritocratic Conservative Party she has precious few friends. Even though she has created a Cabinet in her own image it is hard to find many people in it who like her. They respect and admire her, but that is different.

She has also made quite a few enemies in the party along the way. They are all out there now, waiting for her. As her vulnerability was exposed, so too were they; popping up with vicious questions, rubbing their hands with relish at the revelations. There they were: the sacked Minsters; the ones she never gave a chance; and those who just enjoyed witnessing the frailty of a woman who was once proud of her superhuman reputation.

Mrs Thatcher gets credit in the party for a number of her achievements. Among those mentioned in particular are the control of inflation, the Falklands, and the change in political perceptions that she has created over trade union reform and council house sales. They needed a strong Prime Minster for those things.

But many Tory MPs now privately believe that she has run her course, fulfilled her purpose and should gracefully retire. They think, quite simply, that it is time for a change. They do not envisage Mrs Thatcher as a little old lady taking them on and up to the sunlit uplands and they now clearly fear that her strength will prove to be her fatal weakness. □

Julia Langdon is Political Editor of the Mirror.

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SO WHAT'S REALLY IN IT FOR RUPERT MURDOCH?

Rupert Murdoch's Fleet Street — now Wapping — possessions are a pawn in a chess-game he's running from New York and whose main moves are overwhelmingly American. JOHN RENTOUL on the global connection behind the barbed wire

Paul Mattsson

News International's Wapping plant in East London: protecting Murdoch's profits

OF COURSE PAWNS can be vital to the game, and this week's extraordinary events — barbed wire round a democracy's newspaper office, sackings of print-workers by the thousand, riven NUJ chapels — are not just, as Rupert Murdoch and his aides trumpet, the 'dragging' of British newspapers into the '20th century'.

The events and their timing are part of a larger strategy which has to be deduced because it isn't announced. The 54 year-old former Australian citizen, a naturalised American since last year, is on a buying spree in America and he needs:

- no inroads on his *Sun* profits by new-tech competitors such as Eddie Shah
- maximised cash-flows from all his British papers (the *News of the World*, the *Sunday Times*, *The Times*)
- a demonstration to Wall Street that Rupe can take on the toughest proposition (in this context British unions, constantly trashed in the American media) and *win*.

As we go to press it looks as though he may swing it: get the bulk of his journalists to accept cash inducements and opt for the new premises (though a brave 30 *refuseniks* at the *Sunday Times* were still saying no to what has been thrown at them at the moment of writing), and bring out all his papers with the aid of the electricians' union (EETPU). Only distribution seems after just one week to be a harassing problem for his managers.

Over to the view from the US. We tabulate Murdoch's corporate holdings overpage (p14). Bouncing into the UK from the springboard of an inherited Australian publishing business in the 1960s (when he got the *News of the World* and remoulded the *Sun*), Murdoch bounced into the US during the 1970s. The degraded journalism of the *Sun*, which can seem merely a local shame to the British, was the source of vital profits to underpin his American beachhead.

The colonised situation of his British properties (the *Sunday Times* and *The Times* from 1981), with all the loss of self-esteem that that means to his less self-serving journalists, lies in the fact that he still needs them to keep that American empire building.

IN THE SPACE of 10 months, up to September 1985, Murdoch spent $2,500 million in the US, buying 20th Century Fox, six TV stations in the Metromedia group and the 14 business and travel magazines of the Ziff-Davis group. His ambition is to challenge the big three US TV networks (CBS, NBC and ABC) with a new national network called Fox TV.

He borrowed heavily to pay for this spree, and is proposing a big refinancing package, the details of which have just been made public in the form of a 470-page filing with the US Securities and Exchange Commission (the US financial watchdog). ▷

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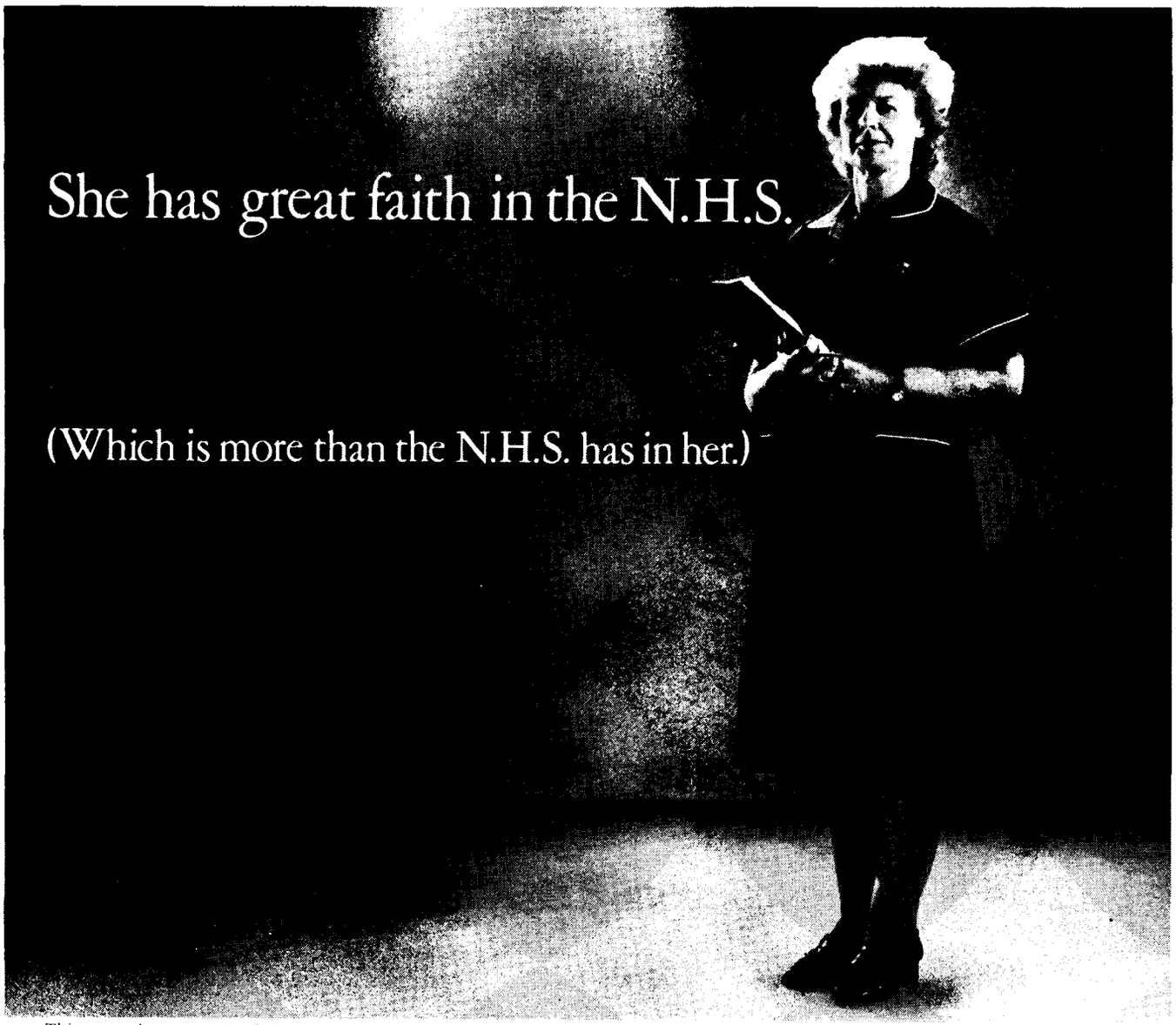

This nurse is a committed, hard working professional. Without her (and thousands more like her) the NHS would collapse.

Twenty years ago, she would probably have been a matron.

Today, thanks to unprecedented changes in NHS organisation, her voice and rôle are being taken from her.

As the protector of British nursing standards (and the largest nursing trade union) the Royal College of Nursing has always believed in the NHS and worked within the system to effect change..

We even have a formal pledge not to strike.

WE'RE FAIR, WHY AREN'T THEY?

So we are more than a little alarmed at the way the NHS is treating us.

The Griffiths Report suggested ways in which the NHS could be made more efficient. Among them was a recommendation that managers should be brought in from outside the NHS to make it more cost-effective.

If better managed resources meant better standards of patient care, we'd be all in favour.

But Griffiths hasn't stopped there.

In more and more health areas, the professional managers have taken it upon themselves to decide that nurses cannot run nursing. Many Health Authorities now have no nurses in managerial positions at all.

So the very people who have specialised for years in looking after patients now have no say.

No say in how best to staff a geriatric ward. No say in what beds to choose for expectant mothers. No say in when patients should be sent home.

NURSES WITHOUT VOICES.

And when nurses lose their voice, the patients lose their spokesman.

When ward closures are considered, nurses aren't consulted. When equipment is being bought nurses' opinions aren't sought.

When patients complain to the nurses, the nurses have no-one who understands nursing to complain to.

The Royal College of Nursing believes that such developments are not in nurses' best interests. Even more important, they're certainly not in the patients' best interests.

What we want to see is the appointment of directors of nursing with both the experience to understand the problems of nursing and the power to make management decisions.

Administrators are qualified to run hospitals. Nurses are uniquely qualified to run nursing.

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The trouble with Metromedia is that it is burdened with debt in the form of 'junk bonds' — a term applied to loans made by investors to corporations, who are 'high risk' borrowers compared with banks and governments. Murdoch inherits $1,450 million-worth of debts from Metromedia, on which he has to pay $132 million a year in interest. The *Financial Times* estimates that in 1985 Metromedia produced $144 million cash flow, which just covers the interest payments. But in 1988 capital repayments on the Metromedia bonds start to fall due, at the rate of an additional $160 million a year.

This is why Murdoch is proposing a refinancing package. In crude terms, he wants to 'reschedule' his debts. He wants to swap the $1,450 million Metromedia 'junk bonds' for $1,500 million of 'increasing-rate exchangeable guaranteed preferred stock' in Fox TV, or 'junk bonds with brass knobs on', that will pay a lower rate of interest initially, rising to 15 per cent after two years. To make them more attractive, the bonds will be partially guaranteed by News Corporation, Murdoch's Australia-registered holding company.

Even if Wall Street buys the Fox TV bonds, the *Financial Times* believes 'News Corporation will have its work cut out to keep its head above water'. It points out that News Corporations's earnings in the financial year to June 1985, and in the next quarter to September, wouldn't have been enough to meet the payments on the proposed Fox TV bonds.

However, Murdoch's company says that the losses have been stopped at 20th Century Fox — the Hollywood studio that will provide most of Fox TV's programmes — and that this means the refinanced debt payments can be met.

SO WHAT IS the connection between Rupert Murdoch's debt mountain in the US and his confrontation with the British print unions over Wapping?

Even before any savings from the move to Wapping, the *Sun* and the *Sunday Times* in particular were vitally important sources of cash for Murdoch's global empire. News Corporation's operating profit in the quarter to September was up 70 per cent over the previous year — and the biggest boost came from the UK, whose contribution more than doubled. The quarterly figures don't disclose the detailed sources of the increase, but the global contribution from newspapers went up from A$3 to 24 million.

Australian stockbrokers Rivkin single out Times Newspapers' profit rise for comment, and estimate that 80 per cent of Murdoch's worldwide profits this year will come from the US and the UK, as opposed to 62 per cent last year. Most of this will have to come from Britain, because Murdoch's US film and TV interests 'can only rank as mediocre until proved otherwise'.

Last year the UK produced 46 per cent of News Corporation's operating profit. In the latest quarter, despite massive US acquisitions (particularly the very profitable Ziff magazines), the UK was still contributing 43 per cent of global operating profit.

In the words of stockbroking analyst Eric de Bellaigue, 'Murdoch uses money fairly intensively'. Reliable profits in one part of the world can be used to provide 'leverage' by backing borrowings in another part. But such heavily-borrowed ventures as Murdoch's ambition to become a global media mogul depend crucially on investor confidence — the willingness of institutions and rich individuals in the US to lend on the strength of one person's record and personality.

De Bellaigue says: 'He has in the past sailed close to the wind financially, but he's demonstrated his ability in those conditions and has a record of editorial success'. And Rivkin, after being rude about Fox TV, say they have a 'very high opinion of Rupert Murdoch as an enterpreneur', and that he has a 'high chance of pulling it off'.

The timing of Murdoch's assault on SOGAT, the NGA and the NUJ is not coincidental, as the £100 million Wapping plant has been ready for use for some years. The heat is on in Wall Street, especially as the Fox TV debt package has run into tax problems with the US authorities. The Metromedia deal is due to go through in mid-March, when the Federal Communications Commission is expected to give its approval. (Under US law restricting multi-media ownership, Murdoch is required to sell the *New York Post* and the Chicago *Sun-Times* if he acquires the six Metromedia TV stations. After telling *Sun-Times* staff in June last year that he would comply with the FCC ruling and not ask for a waiver, he promptly did so, and the FCC is now expected to give him two years' grace.)

Although the UK newspapers are important to Murdoch because they provide money, his real interest, even in the UK, is in TV. At the height of the fuss about Wapping last week he still found time for a series of meetings about direct broadcasting by satellite (DBS) in Britain. He sees this as a market for TV programmes made by Fox TV; Britain (and Europe through Sky Channel, his cable TV company) and Australia will become peripheral markets for his US output. However profitable the *Sun* and *Sunday Times* are, they are inevitably small change in the long term compared with TV. □

Rupert Murdoch

and family own 51% of

News Corporation

registered in Adelaide, South Australia

United States	Britain (News International)	Australia
16% of operating profit†	46% of operating profit†	38% of operating profit†
Television		
20th Century Fox (studios)*	Sky Channel cable TV	TEN-10
Metromedia (6 TV stations)*		ATV-10
Newspapers		
New York Post	Sun	The Australian
Sun-Times, Chicago	News of the World	The News, Adelaide
Boston Herald	Times	Daily Mirror, Sydney
Express-News, San Antonio	Sunday Times	Daily Sun, Brisbane
		Sunday Times, Perth
		Daily Telegraph, Sydney
Magazines and books		
New Woman	Times Supplements	New Idea
Elle	Times Books	TV Week
Star	Elle	
New York Magazine	William Collins (42% interest)	
Business & Commercial Aviation	Bartholomew maps	
Ziff-Davis (14 business titles)*		
Other	Eric Bemrose printers	Computer Power software
	Convoys warehousing, transport	Ansett Airlines (50% interest)
	Townsend Hook paper	

†*Share of operating profit in year to June 1985* **New acquisitions, Metromedia not yet finalised.*

This England

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☐ Police in Derbyshire need a full-time psychiatrist to help them cope with stress and other problems caused by their work, according to the area's Police Federation — *Daily Telegraph* (James Scott)

☐ A *Sunday Post* man in Glasgow went to collect his young daughter from a party and arrived just in time for the last game of "The Farmer's In His Den'. He was taken aback, however, to hear some new verses added to the song. 'The miners are on strike, the miners are on strike,' was followed by 'teacher wants a rise, teacher wants a rise'. — *Sunday Post* (George Moor)

☐ Professor Elton backed him up. 'We need more English history, and not this non-existent history of ethnic entities and women,' he enthused. 'More kings and bishops than wool in the 15th century.' *The Guardian* (Andy Bamidge)

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Pacemaker

A FLOP FOR 'SINNERS'

FIONNUALA O CONNOR surveys the Sinn Fein role in last Thursday's 'referendum' on the Anglo-Irish Agreement

WHEN KEN LIVINGSTONE marched through the streets of Derry to Sinn Fein's commemoration of Bloody Sunday last weekend, he met more than usual warmth and welcome and more than usual security. The leader of the Greater London Council turned up his collar against the cold and told the press he was amazed at the insensitivity of an army which had killed 14 civil rights marchers in Derry, 14 years before — and local people nodded approvingly. They were equally pleased at his assessment that the display was a sop to Loyalists.

There was more approval of the speech which followed. About 5,000 people cheered his apology on behalf of rank and file Labour Party members for Roy Mason. It was his and their shame that the oppression of the Irish people had probably been at its worst in recent years under Mason as Northern Ireland Secretary of State, Ken Livingstone told them. They cheered again, with not a whisper of scepticism, as he added that it was his job to ensure Irish people were never repressed by a Labour government again. But while the applause cheered everyone on a dark, drear day and the sentiments were just the stuff for the occasion, many in the crowd know just how influential Livingstone is in directing Labour policy on Ireland.

On the platform beside the visitor stood Derry man Martin McGuinness, generally recognised as former Chief of Staff of the IRA, and Jim McAllister, defeated Sinn Fein candidate in the by-election contest three days earlier for the constituency of Newry-Armagh. For McAllister it must have been a particularly drear day. He had just watched his rival for the anti-Unionist vote returned to Westminster, maintaining that nationalist approval for the Agreement had helped put him there.

During the miserably cold and wet January canvass for an election the Unionists forced, and no one else wanted, the cheerful and boisterous Jim McAllister campaigned in Newry-Armagh with an air of slight bewilderment against the Social Democratic and Labour Party's deputy leader Seamus Mallon — a 50-year-old who has suffered several heart attacks, but nonetheless vigorously contested the seat against Unionism for his fourth time. In South Armagh, McAllister's home territory, where Sinn Fein and the IRA are presumed to rule supreme, he found the SDLP's constitutional nationalists making sneak raids on doorsteps he reckoned were his personal kingdom.

They were making a mistake, he insisted doggedly, they were trying to steal his vote. Having arrived in local government in strength last May, Sinn Fein had now consolidated their base. 'I wouldn't be surprised if the vote improves,' he said, looking back to the May '85 first preference total of 7,042. In fact, he polled 6,609 to Mallon's 22,694 — an increase for the SDLP man of over 5,000.

No Sinn Feiner (or Sinners, as even Unionists now tend to call the political Provos) would admit during the campaign what many are now willing to say privately. 'It was a bad campaign for us, the SDLP were able to lump us in with the Loyalists as opposed to the Agreement and we struggled to get clear and failed,' said one leading figure this week. 'We came across as negative, and them as positive — and flush with money too.' He added honestly, 'they had a winnable fight in Newry-Armagh and the enthusiasm spilled over into the other constituencies.'

Ken Livingstone (above, with 'Sinner' Jim McAllister) condemns Army/police show of strength

Certainly the contrast in campaign performance was as much in the SDLP's favour this time as it was in Sinn Fein's last May and even more so in the General Election in 1983. Then the SDLP looked tired, middle aged and middle class, short on energy and willing young helpers, dispirited, losers. The IRA, on the other hand, threw itself into politics with all the joy of the convert. Sinn Fein swamped the nationalist ghettoes with posters and keen youngsters, tally wagons (mobile committee rooms) overflowed with helpers and a good time was had by all.

At that time the SDLP talked sourly of their rival's unmatchable military discipline and ready cash from bank robberies. This time Sinn Fein wondered sarcastically why the IRA wasn't funding them any more and pointed to the Republic's governing party, Fine Gael, the SDLP's partner in the pro-Agreement coalition, as constitutional nationalism's new banker. On polling day the busy caravans were the SDLP's tally wagons, the neglected were Sinn Fein's.

SINN FEIN suffered because their supporters didn't see the election as vital, they say. They *had* to fight it because the SDLP refused a pact, but then because of the split in Catholic votes, were faced with the disappointment of nationalists at the prospect of sure Unionist victory, in particular in the natural nationalist seat of Newry-Armagh. Although the SDLP preferred to place the emphasis on the power of the Anglo-Irish agreement to reduce alienation and so wean votes and support from Sinn Fein/the IRA, Mallon himself on the campaign trail made no such grand claims. 'It's a subliminal thing,' he said, 'something at the back of the mind, a potential.' On the doorsteps he said simply: 'We have a chance to take it from the Unionists this time if you all come out.' More did, and he did.

Some commentators ludicrously downplayed the overall Unionist vote — treating it as a percentage of the electorate rather than of the low turnout on a wretched winter's day — but the Unionist leadership undoubtedly got their vote against the Agreement, even if the would-be referendum to clobber Thatcher misfired in Newry-Armagh and cost them an MP. The SDLP have renewed their strength — and will need it to withstand increased British pressure to conciliate Unionists, before ever the Agreement delivers solid, visible reforms.

As for Sinn Fein/the IRA, and the ballot/bullet strategy, they maintain there will be no change in policy. The IRA will go on fighting and Sinn Fein will continue to denounce the Agreement as a meagre concession while claiming credit for the momentum which produced it and any reforms which emerge.

Observers who noticed a distinct upsurge in IRA activity after the Agreement, however, attributed it to a clear desire to 'wind up' Unionist determination to smash the Agreement, in the recognition that only the Protestant majority can conceivably do that, as they did the 1974 power sharing experiment. Given this week's additional disenchantment with the ballot box, the odds are that IRA violence will again increase. □

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FLEET STREET'S OTHER LUST

EXTERMINATE THEM

The 'Cry Wolf' and 'Cry Rat' competitive fever of Britain's tabloid headline-writers has brought them perilously close to Nazi-style propaganda, argues DAVID KEEN

WHY DO humans commit horrible violence against other humans? In terrorism, murder, rioting, football hooliganism? Philosophers, religions, all of us, have wrestled with it but the answer is simple and Britain's tabloids provide it: the sub-human is responsible.

Britain's popular press and especially (of course) the *Sun* repeatedly promote the idea in a form of reporting and especially of sub-editing — headline-writing — which implies that outbreaks of violence, even though they may come in clusters, can have no root socio-economic cause. A pleasing train of thought for this government.

If the violent are promptly labelled 'rats', 'beasts', 'demons', overwhelming retaliation is instantly sanctioned. The extermination of mere pests isn't something to trouble the conscience. If we call the technique 'Crying Rat', I suggest 'Crying Wolf' for the media's parallel habit of portraying non-violent events as if suffused with bloodshed.

Whatever happens it may reasonably be described as *killing*. Thus 'Maggie sends hit

MURDER

squads to "Kill Tarzan" ' is how the *Sun*'s 13 January headline coped with Cabinet criticism of the Defence Secretary's resignation. With added Falklandish overtones the paper went on to say 'Battling Premier Margaret Thatcher yesterday ordered her Cabinet troops to go into action'. The same Cabinet in which 'Heads rolled as Premier Margaret Thatcher boldly swung her axe through Cabinet deadwood' (last 3 September).

That September *Sun* story about the autumn reshuffle was set alongside a report on a man who had stabbed his daughter's teacher to death, and one banner headline did duty above them both: BLUE MURDER. The degree of violence in the two stories was made to seem similar. (And two days later it was BLUE MURDER all over again in the *Mirror* when the apparently all-purpose headline was wheeled out for Spurs' 4:1 football win over blue-clad Chelsea).

Meanwhile *Sun* readers had been able to enjoy a profile of a 'tough guy' who had 'carefully ditched his image as a savage street-fighter ready to boot his opponents in the crutch'. A reformed hooligan? A repentant rioter? No: *Sun* hero and new Tory chair Norman Tebbit, who in shuffling from Trade & Industry to Smith Sq 'swapped his knuckle duster for the steel rapier of a polished statesman' — not, to judge by a *Daily Express* headline of 14 December last, that Tebbit had become too refined: 'Tebbit savages Kinnock again'.

IN THIS PECULIAR world of the British tabloids, where axe-wielding Premiers make *Driller Killer* look like a video nicety, and football teams set out to massacre each other, and Party chairs win more swordfights than the Three Musketeers put together, violence between humans is reduced to the merest commonplace. So the stakes have to go up when what the rest of us would consent to is *real* violence has to be purveyed to the readers.

BEAST KILLS GIRL, 19, IN BED (*Sun*, 11 January); FIEND KILLS GIRL IN BED (*Star*, same date, same story). DAD FINDS GIRL KILLED BY SEX FIEND (*Mirror*). Women murderers are tainted by the supernatural. Child murderer Sandra Riley becomes THE DEVIL WOMAN (*Sun* 10 January) or THE DEVIL'S DAUGHTER (*Mirror*). With this sort of report the humans have to become not-human.

The *Sun* itself spelt out the logic behind the populars' dehumanising language after the recent conviction of Nicholas Price for murdering his stepdaughter: 'What kind of man' the front page asked 'would deliberately starve a child to death? Nicholas Price may *look* like a man, but he has not a particle of the compassion and conscience that raise human beings above wild beasts'. In the caption he was a 'monster'.

Terrorism, rioting, violence during strikes, all attract the same dehumanisation. Of the IRA 'rats' after the Brighton Conference bombing the *Sun* editorial asked 'Presumably these men and women who have no pity look like other human beings with legs, arms and eyes. But what do they have of the feelings that raise man above the beast?' Spanning two pages of the *Star* after rioters killed PC Blakelock in Tottenham last year was HACKED TO DEATH BY HYENAS.

BEAST

More subtly than the nouns, animal-associated verbs perform the dehumanising function: 'howling mobs of black youths' (*Sun* 2 October, on Toxteth rioters). 'Howling youths' (*Star* 8 October, Tottenham rioters). 'Howling mob in pit village ambush' (*Sun* 17 October 1984, miners' strike). 'A black thug *stalks* a Birmingham street with hate in his eyes and a petrol bomb in his hand. The *prowling* West Indian . . .' (*Sun* 11 September, our emphasis).

A whole section of the community risks being dehumanised when those animal verbs are used alongside the adjectival 'black'. And that sub-human slur is of course nothing new. Compare the populars' language about Price, and about the IRA, with this from SS HQ, quoted in Cohn's *Warrant for Genocide*: 'The sub-man — that creature which looks as though biologically it were of absolutely the same kind, endowed by Nature with hands, feet and a sort of brain, with eyes and mouth — is nevertheless a totally different, a fearful creature . . . in mind and spirit lower than any animal . . . and this underworld of sub-men found its leader: the eternal Jew'.

Der Stürmer, the Nazi periodical, handed out the next move after dehumanising language: 'Bacteria, vermin and pests cannot be tolerated. For reasons of cleanliness and hygiene we must make them harmless by killing them off'. Social psychologist Herbert C. Kelman, commenting on Nazi-style massacres, said 'The inhibitions against murdering fellow human beings are generally so strong that the victims must be deprived of their human status if systematic killing is to proceed in a smooth and orderly fashion'.

Disturbing, then, to see British papers link dehumanising language with calls for extermination — a link that hovered in the *Sun*'s term '*Argies*' during its belligerent

ARAB RAT!

Falklands coverage. And hovers sometimes in its treatment of 'internal enemies', as in its coverage of the conviction of child-murderer George Watson, 'white-haired sex monster': TOO WICKED TO LIVE (20 December).

Popular paper polls instantly discover that the public wants deaths: 'BRING BACK ROPE — nearly eight out of ten adults in Britain want child murderers to hang' (*Sun* poll, after conviction of Nicholas Price). And 'Let *him* starve', because Price starved his stepdaughter to death. After the Brighton bombing the same paper had a 'new poll' showing that 'a massive eight out of ten people' backed hanging for IRA terrorists.

Descriptions of criminals as sub-humans are so common in British tabloids that readers can't help getting a message: that anyone who wants the State to kill certain types of criminals isn't demanding the taking of a *human* life. The IRA 'must be hunted remorselessly and exterminated like rats' (the *Sun*).

Arthur Koestler described man as unique (apart from some controversial behaviour in rats and cats) in killing members of his own species on an individual and collective scale. Why do we humans do this? One plausible answer is that our unique linguistic powers allow us to disfigure and distort the repugnant reality of interhuman violence, so as to make it more 'acceptable'.

To cover a mere football victory as if it were a massacre or a murder makes interhuman violence seem normal. To report on murder, rioting or terrorism as if they are the work of animals makes *all* such violence seem insoluble, causeless. And to call for the extermination of the 'animals' carries the greatest danger of all: that retributory onslaughts will be seen as justifiable. We 'Cry Wolf' and 'Cry Rat' at our peril. □

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MEDIA

British films — Epic greed! Hype! Egos!

PHILLIP WHITEHEAD

BRITISH FILM YEAR has certainly achieved its objective of bringing the British film industry to public attention — but not always in ways where were intended. There has been a run of critical successes: *A Private Function*, *The Killing Fields*, *Dance With a Stranger*, and most recently *My Beautiful Laundrette* and *Letter To Brezhnev*. The problem is in translating this success into confidence that investors will not be taken to the laundrette themselves.

With a philistine government phasing out the tax concessions to British cinema which accompanied the old Eadie Levy, and mainstream television for many years parasitic upon it, there is no sense in Britain (outside the laudable operations of the British Film Institute) of a national cultural asset to be fostered, as in France or Australia.

Financing films is thus a lonely road, a perpetual triumph of hope over experience. Each one goes through the same process of hype, bluff and overload, playing the exchanges, hunting out the tax shelters and the pre-sale deals. The process is well described in John Boorman's *Journey Into Light*. In it he quotes the disarming boast of the Hollywood producer Irwin Winkler about his dealings with a colleague: 'We're friends. We lie to each other.' Any British company has to be mindful of the desperate need to succeed in the US market, operating in reduced circumstances on the fringes of a world of monstrous geniality and epic greed.

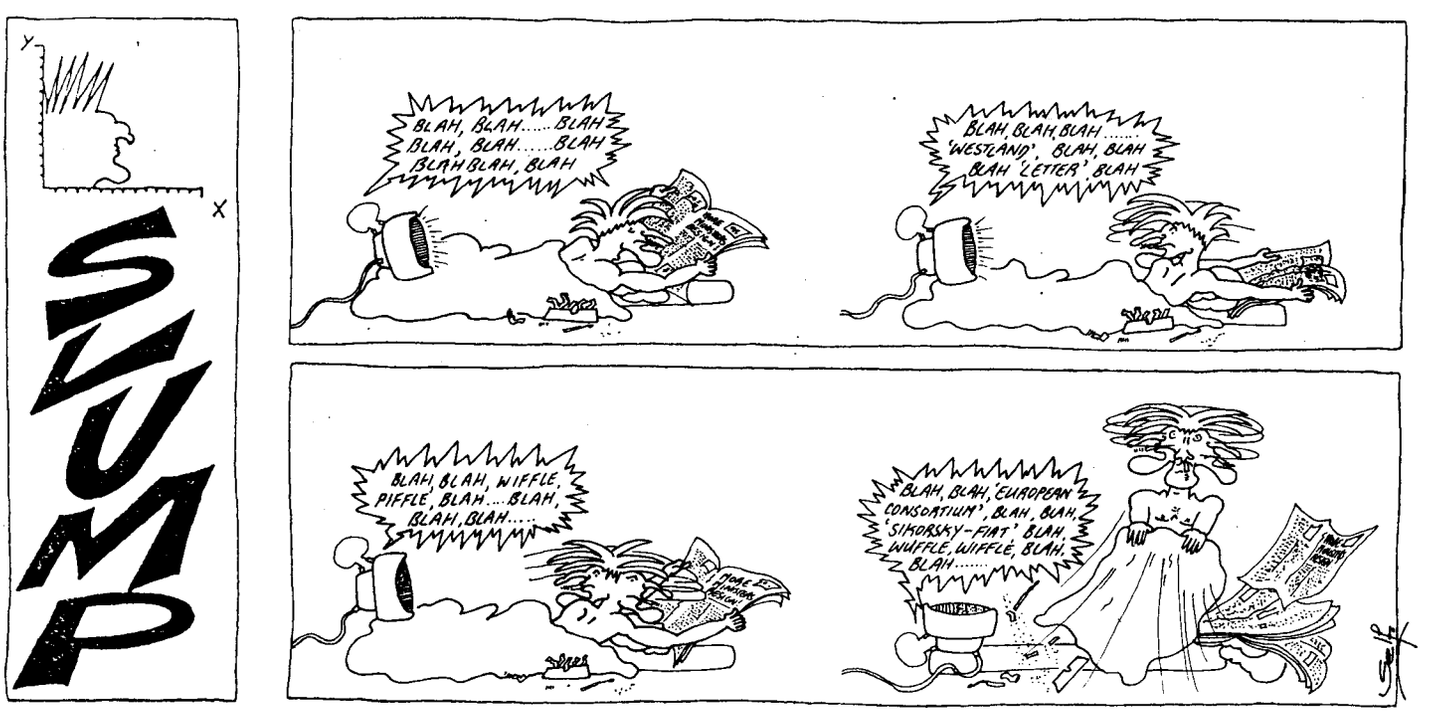
The recent publicity for the troubles of Goldcrest films and TV should not obscure the successful start it made in this field, under its founder Jake Eberts. He persuaded reputable investors to put up solid money for high quality films that were pre-sold before production, that did not rely on overblown Hollywood stars, and that stayed within their budgets. Eberts was edged out by the ambitious and high-flying executive from Pearson's, his principal shareholder, James Lee. Lee was not the first business school whizz-kid to fall for the magic of the movie, not always understanding the chemistry, luck and cunning necessary to make them.

The American cable TV market, once thought forever buoyant, collapsed. The exchange rates moved the wrong way. The government's decision to phase out tax concessions made it harder to get British funds for the major projects Goldcrest now ran in tandem. In addition to a new project from the proven Puttnam/Joffe team, *The Mission*, there was to be an epic of the American Revolution, filmed in East Anglia, directed by Hugh Hudson, whose *Chariots Of Fire* had launched the British film renaissance five years before. That film had Puttnam as producer. This one had Irwin Winkler. *Chariots Of Fire* relied on unknown actors in leading roles. *Revolution* was re-cast to feature Al Pacino and Natassia Kinski as the New England patriot heroes. The rest is history, of a kind. *Revolution* went seriously over budget — a fact Hudson still discusses with breath-taking insouciance. It was not well received in the crucial US market.

Goldcrest, once written up, has now been written down. No article fails to mention the 'lavish offices' in Wardour Street to which James Lee moved the company. As the company has pulled out of television so rumour gathered that it would shrink to a sales company, or disappear into the maw of some transatlantic competitor. That would be a grim day for the British film industry. Fortunately things are no more terminal now than they were euphoric a year ago. Jake Eberts is back as Chief Executive after the departure of James Lee. His quiet candour and sense of the possible are rare in any media business, movies most of all. Goldcrest has *The Mission* to come, which Puttnam and Joffe have delivered within budget and to high quality. *Absolute Beginner* and *A Room With A View* are to be released soon; 1986 will also see the launch of five other films with which Goldcrest is associated. The company will move to more modest haunts in Soho. Its ambitions in TV and cable will be curtailed.

What has been heartening in the wake of *Revolution* has been to see the way in which Goldcrest's original backers stayed along when the going got tough. No one wants to see the company out of production. Its future connection with *The Name Of The Rose*, and possibly Richard Attenborough's *Biko* continues the kind of film-making which has given the British cinema its current reputation. *The Killing Fields* was one way of looking at the wreck of South East Asia after the Vietnam wars. *Rambo* is something different. I hear no clamour for that kind of film to be made here. What Goldcrest will have to do over the coming year is to keep film finance covered by pre-sales, and the major projects unblemished by superstar fees or directorial ego. That was the way in which it all began. Under its present management it still stands for a film business which is not just about losing other people's money and telling lies to your friends. □

Phillip Whitehead is a non-executive director of Goldcrest Film and Television Holdings.



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DIARY

Anne Smith

Edinburgh

Researching an article on why people read their horoscopes, I bought *Chat*, a tabloid style descendant of *Tit-bits*. It carried a jumbo crossword about 'people and events in the 1985 news'. The first two clues indicated that it was the usual sort of tabloid quiz for people who can't think without moving their lips — 'US President (Christian name)'; 'Leon -------, former Home Secretary.' But then came the shock: eight across, 'Relationship of Tara's convicted killer to his victim'; 23 across, 'Describes the plight of those for whom Bob Geldof launched Live Aid'; 36 across, 'How some South African politicians were dubbed by anti-apartheiders'. Why does this shock? Is it because it shows that tragedy and violence have been reduced to entertainment on a par with soap opera and football team changes?

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An equally revealing juxtaposition popped up in the British Airways inflight magazine. The ads here, appealing as they do to grey men in suits who want to believe they lead glamorous lives, can be bitterly amusing in their pretentiousness. But among all this 'relax baby, let it happen' style hype there's a four-page big sell for 'The Secret Connection Briefcase'. It contains: a Voice Stress Analyzer — 'Find Out Who's Lying' — (would it work on radio broadcasts of Prime Minister's Question Time, one wonders?); tape recorder detector; a bomb detector; a bug alert; a miniature recorder; a wire tap detector; a tiny TV camera; a burglar alarm; an infra-red viewer; a cordless phone; 'Security Blanket' flash to blind attackers; a bullet-proof pouch; and a tracking transmitter 'to alert security if you've been kidnapped'. Portable paranoia, in short, available from CCS Counter Spy Shops. Soon you'll be able to send your briefcase to the board meeting alone. It's safer that way.

○

Speaking of paranoia, I was impressed by a series of articles on schizophrenia in *The Times* in December and reminded of them again by a couple of TV programmes on the same subject recently. The current trend is to fill 'em full of drugs and restore 'em to the bosom of the long suffering and as often as not terrified family. Cut back and cover up is the governmental principle behind it, of course. I spoke to a newly retired psychiatric nurse who confirmed that this must be so. By the time most schizophrenics are committed to mental hospitals, their families are practically ready to be committed with them. Relationships have deteriorated to the pits of distrust. I spoke to the daughter of a schizophrenic, who had been advised by psychiatrists about her relationship with her mad mother, soon to be released yet again. 'But I've never *had* a relationship with my mother,' she protested,' 'all I've had is relationships with a series of drugs.' The psychiatrists promised regular visits to help. Over three months no one ever showed up.

○

Mind you, it probably wouldn't have made a lot of difference if they had. Not at least according to reliable sources quoted by Ernest Gellner in his book, *The Psychoanalytic Movement* (Paladin, £3.50). The consensus of informed opinion is summed up in Anthony Storr's comment: '. . . the evidence that psychoanalysis cures anyone of anything is so shaky as to be practically non-existent' (see the chapter on 'The Embourgeoisement of the Psyche'). Gellner's book, by the way, is one of those iconoclastic masterpieces of sceptical good sense and fine intelligence that you might come across once in ten years if you're lucky. He argues — and who would disagree with him? — that psychoanalysis is the opium of the intellectuals; that Freud didn't discover the unconscious, but endowed it 'with a language, a ritual and a church'. This is the first non-fiction book I've ever read in which I turned immediately from the last page back to the first to begin again.

○

And speaking of ritual, a friend who is a theatre critic was complaining the other day about the deadly banality of the London theatre audience, with particular reference, as they say, to the massed interpersonal nudging that took place at the latest *Othello*, when Desdemona appeared most inappropriately in a diaphanous nightie, snigger, snigger. She says audiences encourage English theatre to return to the ritual whence it came. But it's much worse than that, in the West End at least: it imitates television.

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By way of light relief and direct contrast, I received a leaflet on Dianetics through the door last week. 'The human mind,' the late L. Ron Hubbard tells me is 'that vast and hitherto unknown realm half an inch back of our foreheads.' He promises even more confidently than Freud to let me know why I did what I did when I did it, to know what caused the 'Dark and Unknown Fears' of childhood nightmares. But, he vows, 'Dianetics is no solemn adventure . . . its end is always laughter.' I think I've begun at the wrong end, L. Ron.

○

To put all this airy-fairy stuff of the mind in its place, let me sound a practical note about the on-going return not so much to Victorian values as of Victorian conditions. Over Christmas I wanted to make a phone call from a public phone box. For a solid week all the phone boxes within a half mile radius of my house were full up: '999 calls only'. On Boxing Day, New Year's Day and 2 January no trains seemed to run — and very few buses. What the Post Office wasn't doing is already passing from notoriety to legend. So if you had no car and no phone, you'd no way of communicating with your far flung family over Christmas. So much for the Family. Can it be that the unions, like criminals, are victimising their own class first?

ROGER WODDIS

Panic over

'And now, please, may normal service be resumed.'
— Daily Telegraph

When Thelma Brazen rose to speak,
All eager to explain the leak,
The members paled or hugged their knees,
Depending on their loyalties.

Now she would put them in their place —
Or would that bastard nick the Mace?
Some planned to run away and hide,
Some even thought of suicide.

Her voice rang out — no haggard she! —
'Whoever lied, it wasn't me!
My duty's to defend the realm.'
And someone shouted, 'Tell 'em, Thelm!'

And after they'd applauded her —
Misunderstandings *do* occur —
The undivided troops stood firm,
And hungered for another term.

When Windbag Pillock, pride of Wales,
Was barracked, many chewed their nails,
For he had proved himself less deft
Than when he'd bashed the ultra-left.

While some felt glad and some forgave,
Disraeli, turning in his grave,
Said sighing, 'There are lies, damned lies
And forthright, full and frank replies.'

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BEST LAID PLANS OF RICE AND HENS . . .

Just before her death, Third World economist SUZY PAINE (right) gave this paper, in which she looks at the problems of the Vietnamese economy. Her conclusions lead her to criticise — with regret — state planning in poor communist countries

MY FIRST PROPOSITION is that right from the outset, from the middle of the 1940s when the Vietnamese declared their independence, or if you prefer from 1954 when they really came to power in the North, Vietnam was a shortage economy. Furthermore, it became even more of a shortage economy over time.

By the term 'shortage economy' I mean two things. The obvious common sense meaning is that there are not enough resources to feed everybody; that there is a physical scarcity of basic essentials. However, I am concerned in particular with the second meaning of the term which applies to economies like Vietnam's, in which shortages are actually generated by the system. In principle, everybody could be fed. But because of the way things are organised and policies are pursued, in fact resources get wasted. So I am using the term 'shortage economy' to mean one in which shortages actually get created and reinforced.

Once chronic shortage has been achieved, it is very, very difficult to reverse. This is what reform is all about. And this is where we see the limitations of authoritarian planning in their sharpest form.

When we talk about planning we should be very careful what we mean. In the Vietnamese case most of the time people think of the old type of Stalinist quantitative, authoritarian planning. But, of course, there are all sorts of other planning, such as the planning proposed by the Labour Party in Britain. It is important to recognize that 'planning' means what the authors intend it to mean. Actually, it is about bargaining, and how resources should be distributed. In other words it is a political term *par excellence* rather than an economic one.

That's why we have to be careful when we talk about whether a planning system 'works'. But in general I want to put forward a second proposition, that when you are in a situation of chronic shortages, authoritarian planning is at least as bad as the market. It is not necessarily worse — it is not better or worse than the market system. I came to this conclusion very sadly and very bitterly over many years, because I started off absolutely convinced of the merits of planning. It was only when I saw planning could go as badly wrong as the market that I started to change my views.

On a more positive note, my third proposition is that in a country like Vietnam the right kind of strategy to pursue is what can be termed 'wage-goods-led growth'. By wage goods I mean subsistence goods at a particular point in time. So in contemporary Vietnam we mean basics such as food, clothing, housing and a few other items; I do not mean luxury goods. But at a different stage of the same economy, higher level consumer goods might come into the category.

Thus-wage-goods-led growth needs to proceed through various forms of structural change. Not the kind of structural change that receives most emphasis in the literature — the building of heavy industry — but the move to higher value agricultural produce and to slightly higher value consumer manufactures. In particular diversification within agriculture, away from lower value-added crops to higher value-added agrarian products.

NOW FOR a brief historical view of Vietnam. From the outset authoritarian planning with its strategy of industrial priority never stood much of a chance. You can hardly blame the Vietnamese for this, the strategy was handed out to them.

Politically, however, mass support was for land reform, the education of children and better housing. There was never any great peasant support for rapid collectivisation. And as long as they got food and clothing peasants did not care too much who owned and controlled industry.

At the same time, economically there was not the per capita surplus in the country for collectivisation and for heavy industry to be given priority. The old sort of model — from the Soviet Union's first Five Year Plan, China's first Five Year Plan, to India's second Five Year Plan — had certain crucial pre-requisites. These, Vietnamese circumstances did not match. First, there have to be the micro-economic structures within which people actually want to work and produce. In a really poor country people work in agriculture because the risk of failure is very great and people can starve. Under war conditions collective sacrifices can and do work. This kept Vietnam going. But once this sort of circumstance ceases to apply you run into trouble, as Vietnam did after 1975.

In addition to having the right kind of micro-economic structures for collectivisation to work there have to be good links between the micro-economy and the macro-economy, which means prices and the availability of goods. If people do turn up at work, do work hard, put their best into production and get products, they want to be able to sell them for a decent price so that they themselves can have basic consumer goods to improve their life, or better investment goods to help them produce.

These conditions did not apply in Vietnam. Instead, nationalisation and collectivisation survived in Vietnam because of the war. People had strong motives, while the system and its controls were applied in a very lax way. Physical shortages, especially of rice in the towns, were alleviated by Chinese aid.

But the minute the war was over the system's endemic problems began to show.

SUZY PAINE

SUZY PAINE died last November aged 39 after a brave and painful struggle with cancer. She was an economist of formidable talent and humour. When a suspected secondary tumour was found near her brain she compared it to a large multinational company setting up a subsidiary. A girl from Stockport who became a Cambridge don but never accepted the pomposities of Oxbridge, Suzy Paine was one of the most experienced economists of the Third World. She travelled widely, and wrote and taught about Turkey, Japan, India, China and Vietnam. She did not stint herself and was a close observer of the actual conditions, especially of the poor. A passionate socialist without airs or party, she was capable of seeing through national development statistics to the human realities of both planners and planned, qualities which come out clearly in this her last paper. It is transcribed from a presentation which she delivered with characteristic verve in September to an international seminar on Vietnam organised by the American Social Science Research Council and held at the Institute for Development Studies at Sussex.

Anthony Barnett

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They did so in the midst of all the accumulated legacy of the years of war, the physical destruction of the infrastructure, the railways and bridges, and the personal losses. On top of this came the politically inevitable but economically disastrous decision to go ahead with reunification of North and South. I quite understand the political reasons for the decision, but its economic effects were punishing.

In theory the North should have been better off as it had captured all the shiny assets of the South. In practice what actually happened was that the South syphoned off resources. This was because of the shortage of inputs. The Americans had gone and virtually nothing could actually be produced.

To get outputs from the assets, the Vietnamese had to channel key materials from the North, which reduced the availability of both consumer and investment goods in the North. This in turn reduced the incentive for northern agriculture to grow and develop. At the same time the goods channelled from the North to the South were not sufficient to keep the South's living standards at wartime levels. Thus the South became disaffected and the North finished up distinctly worse off.

The policies introduced by the sixth plenum (in 1979) did something to ameliorate the situation. The reforms have not gone as far as I hoped at the time. Then Vietnam was rather ahead of China, especially in terms of its assessment of Maoist ideology. It put more effort into agriculture, yet even the rural reform measures did not get very far and in industry they got hardly anywhere. The reasons why Vietnam's reforms have not proceeded as fast as they could have are socio-political rather than economic.

Perhaps the key one concerns the cadres. This is really an acute problem in a very poor Communist Party State. Under collectivisation cadres hold a monopoly control over local resources. For perfectly comprehensible reasons they are most reluctant to go in for any changes. Many of them have been at it for a long time, doing their best.

So one has to find a way to neutralise their reluctance to see reforms implemented. The Chinese pushed through their agricultural reforms by buying off the cadres: they gave them priority access to loans, to invest in things like chicken breeding. They might not be cadres any more, but they could do very nicely.

IN VIETNAM control is really what matters and is still very much the heart of the story. These controls operate through networks that are often semi-formal. In other words, we are not talking about control from the centre, although that is what it might seem like if you talk superficially to representatives.

For example, the authorities do their best to obtain accurate information from their statistics staff. Not only can they not get accurate statistics, but the planning system itself does not really function at all. In reality you have a whole range of constrained parallel markets. Furthermore, a lot of time is wasted in the effort to find out how or where to get things. This alone has a bad effect on productivity. Overall planning in Vietnam is really a set of cultural wishes and good intentions.

This might be fine if it were not that many officials still believe, or at least encourage others to believe, that somehow if only it were not for dreadful accidents (such as floods) that planning would work. Of course, we would like planning to work better, but we should realise its limitations, especially in a poor country.

We have to ask, what is the main objective in countries such as Vietnam? The highest priority must be to raise the standard of living of the majority of the population as quickly as possible, while giving the ordinary person more control over the conditions of his and her life.

With this objective, then, I would argue for the advantages of what I call a small state, a state which does what it can do properly. In Vietnam the State has got plently to keep itself busy, particularly in terms of the physical infrastructure. It has a major role to play in terms of investment, in terms of roads, communications, hospitals, education.

These are all essential activities and very much part of the job of a small state. So it is not that its task is that small. But it should do *these* things rather than attempt to extract large amounts of resources which it then seeks to invest in directly productive activity.

There is a feeling that if a state can't get taxation, then it can't have any investment. This is nonsense. Investment can anyway take place with voluntary funds. It should be easier and it is certainly preferable to persuade people to invest on their own account rather than, when they are poor, try and extract money from them and tell them we know better.

For a start people will only believe that the government knows better when there are goods in the shops. This is not the situation in Vietnam at present. But, while there are no goods around in the shops, there is also no other great big alternative monopoly around, beside the State. So the agricultural, small business and service sectors should be encouraged through market incentives. In fact anything that produces more output is a good thing.

This has emerged clearly in the Chinese reforms. Both the number of people doing productive labour and the hours they put in have risen dramatically. There has been a huge increase in productivity in China, in the rural sector. It may look as if this is due to a shift into higher value-added products. But if you actually start measuring productivity per hour, it becomes more complicated. For it became so profitable to work much harder because people could keep their wages and spend them with effect on houses and household goods, that there was a huge increase in the amount of labour time in the first year or two of the Chinese reforms.

So I would very much advocate a 'small state' using the agricultural and small business sectors. These are essentially family matters and could be called the family sector of the economy. Of course, the market will, in Vietnam as elsewhere, start to cause problems. But at this stage it is the only way to get the economy moving and living standards to rise. While in addition it is a form of protection from the bureaucracy for the ordinary peasant.

Resistance to reform has diminished in Vietnam. In part Gorbachev's ascendency in the Soviet Union has helped, in part the Cambodian situation (where *laissez faire* policies have worked well) has also done so. Growth in Vietnam will be difficult, but is far from impossible.

It does not necessitate foreign aid or even Soviet help. Vietnam can get a long way on its own because of the amount of waste. But Hanoi will only mobilize its population if the people of Vietnam are allowed to decide for themselves to intensify their efforts.

I think there is hope for Vietnam. Perhaps the problem is to persuade the political leaders that policies based on good intentions are useless. Indeed, it might be said that if you need to set up a committee to do something about it, then it's a bad policy. □

PHILIPPINE ELECTIONS

US CONJURES UP SPECTRE TO BOLSTER MARCOS

President Marcos may have outwitted his domestic opponents and US patrons to survive the 7 February elections. HENRY JACKSON reports

IT TOOK A second grenade to disperse the crowd gathered for Cory Aquino's rally in Zamboanga earlier this month. The strength of the appeal which the widow of the assassinated Senator 'Ninoy' Aquino holds makes her the most formidable opponent faced by President Marcos in the present Philippines elections. While Marcos does not rely on personal popularity — if he wants a crowd he hires one and buses it in — tens of thousands have gathered to hear Mrs Aquino speak on her tours around the country.

The hopes of many Filipinos have been raised by a widely held belief that the elections have been forced onto Marcos by the Reagan Administration which is fast losing patience with the dictator's failure to reform his regime. To be sure, much of the show is directed at Washington; Marcos's announcement of elections went out on American TV in November — only one month after Senator Paul Laxalt travelled to Manila to bring from President Reagan an extremely blunt message of warning. However, Marcos has in effect out-manoeuvred the Americans. By calling the elections so quietly he has ensured that Washington has not had time to cultivate another US-friendly right-wing candidate who

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Marcos may survive because the opposition is split — but demonstrations like this one, in May 1985, won't go away

enjoys Marcos's control of the army but is free from his stigma of corruption.

Up until the 1940s the islands were the only US colony. Today the largest American military bases and nuclear weapons stores outside the US mainland are at Subic Bay and Clark in the Philippines. The build-up of Soviet military facilities at Cam Ranh Bay in Vietnam (a base built by the US during the Vietnam War) adds to the strategic value of the Philippines to the Americans. The islands also straddle the oil route from the Middle East to Japan.

With so much at stake Washington appears to view with more alarm than Marcos the growth of armed communist insurgency in the Philippines countryside. US military intelligence estimates that the guerrilla forces of the New People's Army number about 15,000 and are increasing at the rate of 20 per cent a year. At the same time the anti-Marcos movement has broadened across all classes which was the Americans' great fear.

All sectors of Philippine society have become increasingly polarised. Militant trade unions have emerged and formed a powerful confederation called the KMU (Kilusang Mayo Uno). The KMU has suffered repression and many of its leaders have been murdered or imprisoned, but it doggedly continues to operate in the open and there has been a dramatic rise in the number of strikes over the last three years. Protest has also spread to the professional and middle classes. It was they who filled the streets in Makati, the business district of Manila in massive demonstrations after the Aquino assassination in August 1983.

In May 1985 a new political federation was formed called Bayan (Bagong Alyansang Makabayan, New Patriotic Federation) which joined militant unions, peasants' organisations and slum dwellers together with church groups, teachers and other professionals. It also drew in some nationally prominent figures among the 'traditional' politicians, including liberal Senator Tanada, who had long voiced opposition to Marcos, and who became chair of Bayan. Bayan formulated a radical set of demands, not that distant from those of the banned National Democratic Front, committed to the removal of Marcos. These it proceeded to back up with a programme of massive civil disobedience.

Bayan is an important political force. Yet it has received virtually no attention from the world press covering the elections. With remarkable speed Bayan built up a formidable national base, and currently claims an active membership of two million, with much wider support. One of its most powerful tactics is the Welgan Bayan, or People's Strike. Whole provinces are brought to a halt by such mobilisations.

In June, for example, Bayan called for a three-day People's Strike in Bataan over the building of a nuclear power plant in the province. Eight towns were paralysed as all banks, shops, schools, public transport and government offices shut down. Even fishing boats at the local port refused to put to sea. The regime has reacted. Marcos brought out tanks onto the streets of Bataan (protestors could be seen trying to grapple with armoured cars with their bare hands). Then in September in Escalente in Negros 27 protestors, mostly sugar workers, were shot dead at a Bayan rally.

MEANWHILE, MARCOS has effectively forced his own strategy on the US. He does not want to share power — so thoroughly concentrated at present in the Presidential palace — though in the long term the Americans may still try to force him to do so. The likelihood of him staying in office has been increased not only by the lack of another US-backed candidate but by the divisions within the opposition.

Bayan's attempts to get Mrs Aquino to commit herself to a radical reform programme have failed. Instead of forming an alliance with Bayan she has chosen to run with Doy Laurel, a former political ally of Marcos. Laurel, who now heads his own party, Unido, offers the kind of familiar political vehicle which the elite families (and Mrs Aquino certainly belongs to one of those) are used to.

Radical promises being made by Mrs Aquino at the start of her programme have been substantially watered down. An early commitment to get rid of the US bases has now become a promise to review the leasing agreements after they run out in 1990. Radical reforms on land distribution and ownership of industry have disappeared altogether.

A group of mineworkers speaking shortly

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after an Aquino rally in the highland town of Baguio told me 'It's impressive. The rally was big and this is supposed to be Marcos's "Solid North". But we do not believe there will be a genuine election. Marcos controls everything. It is hard for us even to believe in Cory Aquino. She says she is sincere, but nothing else. She reminds us about her husband's death, but she says nothing about the strikers who get killed on the picket lines.' Their boss, Jaime Ongpin, the owner of the Benguet mining corporation, is an enthusiastic Aquino supporter.

The election has caused cracks in Bayan. Many prominent figures have 'taken leave' from Bayan to join Mrs Aquino's campaign, including the chair, Senator Tanada himself. The rank and file of Bayan, the union and peasant activists who bear the brunt of government repression, refuse to join them. They believe the election is a sham. At their National Council meeting on 8 January region after region reported their chapters voting to boycott the elections. Some are preparing strikes for election day. But many delegates privately told me that the multi-class coalition that Bayan had built has been seriously set back by these differences.

US energies are now focussed on justifying to the world their continued support of the regime, whether or not the elections are shown to be a sham. This process has already begun. Already IMF bank loans that had been withheld — the Philippines is $26 billion in debt — have been unfrozen. Soon after the election was announced, an article appeared in the right-wing American news journal *Commentary* by Ross Munro of *Time Magazine* claiming that the New People's Army is conducting 'a reign of terror' in the Philippine countryside. The title of the article was 'The New Khmer Rouge'.

This theme has since dominated every press statement given by Jeane Kirkpatrick who has been delivering the unofficial Reagan Administration line on the elections. Marcos is no longer viewed by the US as another Somosa — a dictator whose refusal to share power and wealth led to his downfall and the establishment of a left-wing government. He is Lon Nol — a baddie who is nevertheless better than what could follow. Extracts from the film *The Killing Fields* have been edited into Marcos's campaign broadcasts.

The new message was repeated for British readers in the London *Times* on 27 November by Ron Podhoretz, editor of *Commentary*. 'Like Lon Nol, Marcos faces a communist insurgency, by the New Peoples Army. And like Lon Nol too, Marcos is accused of tyranny, mismanagement and corruption, although on an even larger scale'. He asks will 'the Americans some day look back on Marcos as they now look back on Lon Nol and contemplate what hideous things followed . . .?' The article is entitled 'Why we must suffer Marcos'.

The US will 'suffer' Marcos because it has no feasible alternative. It will try to force the Filipinos to suffer Marcos by conjuring up for the benefit of world opinion the spectre of an evil red threat. □

Henry Jackson writes for International Labour Reports.

FEUDAL SPAIN

NOT ALL FUN ON COSTA DEL SOL

NICHOLAS BELL on the persistent land reform protests of Andalusia's *jornaleros*

WHILE NORTH Europeans are making their plans for summer holidays on the sunny beaches of the Andalusian Costa del Sol, hundreds of thousands of agricultural *jornaleros* — day labourers — in Andalusia are facing heavy jail sentences and fines for demanding work.

Little has changed since the Middle Ages. Andalusia possesses the richest land in Spain and yet it has the poorest population in the country. Feudal structures of land ownership persist with 60 per cent of the land belonging to 2,500 *latifundistas* — large estate owners — who make up under two per cent of the population (the Lopęz de la Puerta family owns 72,000 acres, the Duchess of Alba 82,000 acres), while 500,000 labourers remain unemployed for most of the year or are forced into emigration. Between 1960 and 1973 alone, 2.5 million Andalusians left their villages to seek work elsewhere in Spain or other European countries where they are exploited as cheap labour.

Spain's entry into the Common Market will further worsen the situation by strengthening the process of 'modernisation' which has already over the last couple of decades replaced most of the 'social' crops (ie labour-intensive) with highly mechanised crops (cereals, sunflowers, colza). 90 per cent of Spanish cotton is produced in Andalusia, but Israeli competition is forcing the landowners to either mechanise or give up cotton. In 1984, 170,000 acres were sown; each acre represents 45 worker-days of manual labour. Thus mechanisation would cause the loss of millions of worker-days. The EEC has also recently proposed that 60 per cent of Andalusia's olive trees should be uprooted. This will increase unemployment, and in today's crisis-ridden Europe emigration is no longer an alternative.

For some years, the day labourers have been organising and developing their opposition to this development. In 1976 the Sindicato de Obreros del Campo (SOC — Union of Field Workers) was founded and has since become the voice of Andalusian day labourers. The SOC's demands are clear: 'Land and Liberty' and agrarian reform. 'Land, like air and water, is a gift of nature that nobody may appropriate for his own individual gain or personal enrichment. Land is a public asset, belonging to the people, which should be used and enjoyed by those who work it'.

TO DRAW ATTENTION to their desperate situation and to their demands, the SOC has organised throughout Andalusia a series of spectacular campaigns. In 1983, 10,000 labourers marched on Seville where 300 of them shut themselves into the church for 52 days. Roads have been blocked, strikes organised to demand a more just distribution of the work available and the cultivation of 'social crops'.

Most feared by the big *latifundistas* are, however, the land occupations. These began in 1978 and, ever since, the SOC has regularly organised occupations of big estates where the *jornaleros* try and show that other forms of development are possible (forestation, irrigation, 'social crops', co-operatives). One of the recent occupations was last summer at Marinaleda, a village of 3,000 inhabitants of whom 600 are unemployed agricultural workers. In this village the Duke of Infantado owns a vast estate of several thousand acres, *El Humoso*. The SOC is demanding the expropriation of 4,800 acres in order to set up a co-operative, and to construct a dam which would make possible the irrigation of 120,000 acres.

The Andalusian government has proposed a timid programme of agrarian reforms but these will do little to fundamentally alter the structures of land ownership or improve the lot of day labourers. Moreover, the big landowners, who ever since the Franco era have maintained close links with the Guardia Civil and the judges, refuse to accept any type of agrarian reform.

The repression against the *jornaleros* has been harsh, with the police often intervening with considerable violence. Over 300 day labourers have either already been taken to court and condemned or are waiting for their trials to start. Sentences of up to two or three years' imprisonment, or of large fines are common for trivial offences of participation in peaceful demonstrations with the sole aim of demanding land and work.

One group of labourers has even been condemned to fines of 5,000 pesetas each for having continued working on a farm after the expiry of a one-day contract and 'thereby attempting to force the landowner to re-employ them'. Others are on trial for having chained themselves to olive trees and demanding work. In another case, Rafael Montes, the Mayor of Los Corrales, was condemned to a suspended sentence of six months' imprisonment and suspension from all public duties during this period. He had been condemned for 'sedition' — he had closed his town hall for a day in solidarity with striking agricultural workers from Los Corrales.

Although hundreds or even thousands of labourers often take part in the SOC's demonstrations and land occupations, the same names regularly appear in the indictments: the union's leaders and most militant members. One militant, for example, has been indicted in 12 cases taking place in several separate courts. □

A brochure, Land and Liberty — The Struggle of Agricultural Workers in Andalusia, *can be ordered from CEDRI, B.P. 42, 04300 Forcalquier, France (Price £2). CEDRI (The European Committee for the Defence of Refugees and Immigrants) is organising a Europe-wide support campaign for the Andalusians.*

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LETTERS

Stripping illusions

Sylvia Ayling, Woodford Green, Essex

If ever there was an example of imperialist thinking influencing language it is the use of the word 'industry' in relation to 'sex', as though the people involved in its processes/commercial transactions were either merely victims of economic, or masters of social, circumstances. Both 'sex' and 'industry' are, of course, comprehensible to us because they involve human activities and mind set which serve to indulge and profit from what are essentially masculinist myths and fantasies. These points are well brought out in the articles by Nickie and Steve Roberts (*NS* 17 January).

However, the articles perpetrate an illusion that there is no difference between those who sit in factories turning out sex 'aids' and garments of a 'sexy' nature. There are many 'real' workers in the sex industry, but there must surely be some differentiation between those women who just sit there and get exploited and those whose actual bodies are fetished to serve as instruments in and objects for the games men play. To be a prostitute and call yourself a worker in the sex industry is to accept what Simone de Beauvoir has called a descriptive perspective for absolute truth. The model underpinning the articles is wanting. Somehow, the 'realistic' acceptance by both sexes that body and mind are objects for sale in the marketplace has to be perceived as an aberration which results from the firmly held belief that the male is the measure of all things. It is but a part of the whole, terrifying denigration of women's reproductive powers — powers on which the survival of the species as yet depends. As Margaret Mead pointed out, paternity is a social construction. And so is the 'profession' of prostitution.

Dr Alan Chedzoy, Weymouth, Dorset

The ambivalence at the heart of the Roberts's articles is that they simultaneously seem to be attacking the 'sex industry' and defending it. They studiously avoid the language of morality and in using the phrase 'the sex industry' imply that it is an occupation rather like agriculture or coal-mining, socially necessary and always with us. I would have been more impressed if they had discussed the issue of whether or not prostitution should or could be ended, and if so, how.

Somehow, one does not get the impression from these articles that the Roberts are really concerned about the buying and selling of human beings in prostitution. Nickie Roberts complains about the plenitude of middle-class PhDs on the streets who interview prostitutes in order to promote their own academic careers. One might ask how this is different from Nickie Roberts's own conduct. Are not these articles advertising copy for the book we are promised 'later this year'?

Most working-class girls, however poor, do not become prostitutes because they have too much respect for themselves as human beings. The Roberts's implicit condoning of a society in which sex is for sale, because everything is for sale, is a logical extension of Thatcherite thinking. Those who use prostitutes, or set them to work, are guilty of immoral and, therefore, unsocialist conduct. Their writings will, no doubt, open up new possibilities for vicarious sexual exploitation posing as concerned reminiscence.

Angèle Anet, London N1

Your feature, 'stripping illusions', was an ideological tract which had nothing to do with the empirical reality of its subject. I read it because it purported to be a socialist view of striptease. But all I found in it was trendy jargon.

English sexual culture is very poor and nasty on the whole and its socialist fringe is the poorest and nastiest. What Steve Roberts describes — men masturbating in the isolation of 'peep show' cubicles — does occur, I suppose. But it has nothing to do with striptease. And it occurs because of the awfulness of official English sexual culture. In France there would be no need to explain why striptease, willingly and sexily performed, is a very nice thing, and why a society is the better for having it. In middle-class England it is impossible to explain it. (Working-class England arranges striptease for itself without bothering to explain or justify it.)

I worked in the Soho 'sex industry' for ten years. There are too many people like Steve and Nickie Roberts in the 'industry' who dislike what they are doing, do it as unattractively as possible, and despise the people whose money they take. The other reason is that official England, the England of Mrs Thatcher and Ken Livingstone's GLC, prefers to have a 'sex industry' which is nasty, sleazy and fraudulent.

I was a table clearer and typist before I went stripping. I did not resent being either. And I did not go stripping for the money. I went stripping because I was taken to strip shows in which there were some attractive girls who obviously liked what they were doing, and I thought: what a *nice* thing to do!

Our relationship with the 'punters' was completely different from that described by Nickie Roberts. It was a pleasure to see them perk up as they realised they were finally seeing stripping of a kind they had only read about.

A good strip act could be a kind of sexual experience for all concerned. The idea that sexual intercourse is all there is to sex — or is that all that can be admitted by respectable people — is one of those English crudities which have been transmitted from the Victorian bourgeoisie to the middle-class Left. Striptease, done by people with a talent for it, is one of the most classless activities going. While I was 'exploited' in an economic sense, because somebody made a profit, the job satisfaction was great. And there were more good strippers in the days of full employment than in the days of Thatcherism.

Miss East, Torquay, South Devon

I would like to say how upset I was at the photograph you used to illustrate 'Stripping illusions'. The bottom half of the picture gives all the information needed as to what is going on. The only reason I can see for the top half being used is sensationalism. I really thought you would have more respect for your readers.

If Aids is so funny . . .

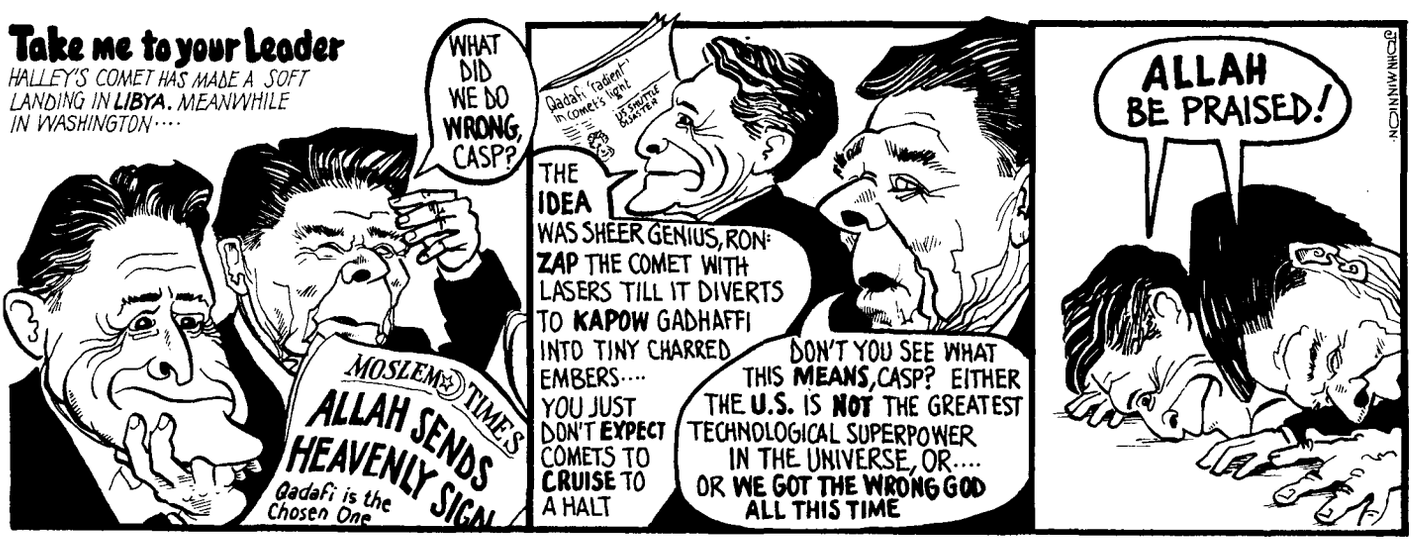
Peter Brady, London E8

In July last year *New Statesman* published a three-page article on the media's blame for Aids hysteria.

On 17 January ('If the caption fits . . .') you honoured Nicholas Leonard with first prize for a caption 'The catering staff have Aids' from its Christmas fun issue.

Which is the biggest joke? The caption, or the magazine that published it?

Ed. note: We *said* it was a 'disgraceful' remark hoping to make clear that the reader who submitted it was putting what passes for right-wing humour into the mouth of Geoffrey Howe. But we accept that as presented it was very much open to being read as a straightforward 'joke' of just the kind the *NS* has attacked (as Peter Brady rightly says) and will go on attacking. Aids, indeed, isn't remotely funny.


Take me to your Leader
HALLEY'S COMET HAS MADE A SOFT LANDING IN LIBYA. MEANWHILE IN WASHINGTON····
WHAT DID WE DO WRONG, CASP?
Qadafi 'radiant' in comet's light
US SATTLITE BUSTER
THE IDEA WAS SHEER GENIUS, RON: ZAP THE COMET WITH LASERS TILL IT DIVERTS TO KAPOW GADHAFFI INTO TINY CHARRED EMBERS···· YOU JUST DON'T EXPECT COMETS TO CRUISE TO A HALT
DON'T YOU SEE WHAT THIS MEANS, CASP? EITHER THE U.S. IS NOT THE GREATEST TECHNOLOGICAL SUPERPOWER IN THE UNIVERSE, OR···· OR WE GOT THE WRONG GOD ALL THIS TIME
MOSLEM TIMES
ALLAH SENDS HEAVENLY SIGN
Qadafi is the Chosen One
ALLAH BE PRAISED!
JOHN MINNION

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Ban on Farrakhan was right

Peter Bradley, Poale Zion, London NW8

Why is it that the *New Statesman* (viz Jolyon Jenkins's article, 24 January) finds it so difficult to take a position in the Farrakhan case? Is it because in denouncing this unreconstructed anti-Semite, it risks offending a small number of black militants?

Farrakhan's colour is irrelevant: he is a racist and should be exposed and opposed on principle and without equivocation. Councillor Lester Lewis, if he is a socialist, will understand that the fight against racism is an indivisibly common cause for black, white, Muslim and Jew. Black liberation cannot be advanced if it marches with anti-Semitism: Farrakhan can have nothing constructive to say to black people in Hackney, New York or anywhere else.

Were the racist Rabbi Kahane to seek entry to Britain, I hope that the Home Secretary would exclude him. More than that, I hope that no representative Jewish group would have been so misguided to have invited him in the first place.

What a waste

Christian Wolmar, London N1

A residuary body must have slipped into my feature on the GLC (*NS* 24 January) turning a key point into disposable waste. I wrote: 'A distinction needs to be made between the two separate processes involved in abolition. The first is the transfer of services which, in a few cases, such as parts of the planning and recreational functions, may be quite sensible and in others, like waste disposal and research, ludicrous. Overriding that, however, is the use of abolition as a mechanism for cuts which will ultimately be more damaging to Londoners.'

The actual act of abolition can be viewed as politically neutral. For example, if London Transport were being removed from a Tory GLC to be run by a board of Labour appointees, I suspect the respective pro and anti abolition lobbies would have a very different complexion.

Lambeth in court

Stephen Bubb, Lambeth Fighting Fund, Chief Whips Office, Lambeth Town Hall, London SW2

At present 32 Lambeth Councillors are in the High Court defending themselves against the charge of 'wilful misconduct'. There are few more serious charges that can be laid against local councillors. The personal consequences of losing this case are severe for the individuals concerned. The precedents established will have serious effects for other labour councils. A lot hangs on the result of this case!

The legal costs to the 32 councillors are higher than the amount of the surcharge the District Auditor has certified. If we are not able to find these costs we are automatically disqualified from office and possibly bankrupt. We have decided to fight our case, and we believe in the strength of our cause.

Already £80,000 has been raised to fight the case but unfortunately this is not enough. We hope that anyone concerned to see justice done will help us raise the remaining £40,000 by sending contributions to me, care of the address above.

Islington surveys crime

Trevor Jones, London N5

The Islington crime survey ('Loony-tune law & order', *NS* 24 January) is not an adjunct to the Merseyside crime survey but a distinct piece of research carried out for Islington Council by the Centre for Criminology based at Middlesex Polytechnic. Its scope is more extensive than previous crime surveys and will include information on perception of penality, political identity and views on crime and policing, heroin abuse and new research by John Lea on Neighbourhood Watch. The report, co-authored by myself, Brian Maclean and Jock Young, will be published by Gower Press, Croft Road, Aldershot, Hants GU11 3HR in March.

FEEDBACK

Running scared

IN HIS admirably concise survey of the divided state of Left thinking in the face of the imminent closure of our Victorian asylums (*NS* 10 January), David Berry alludes to the differences of theoretical opinion about the nature of mental illness underlying the various policy options now under discussion. As a socialist and professional mental health worker who has also been a patient, I have become acutely aware of the muddled state of Left theory about mental health and the disabling consequences of this for both consumers and practitioners alike.

The central unresolved tension for Leftists seems to be the difficulty of reconciling a broadly social determinist view of the origins of mental illness with a commitment to face-to-face therapeutic relationships with individuals. Confronted with immediate experience of our own or others' mental suffering we are surely obliged to make links between issues of individual responsibility and social, economic and political causation. However, more often than not the Left's reaction to the difficulty of this task is to retreat into a deep ambivalence about the whole question of mental illness.

Thus we find it comparatively easy to identify and oppose oppressive psychiatric practice and abuse of civil liberties, much harder to forge a progressive therapeutics informed by socialist principles. It is fairly simple to point to the social indicators of poor mental health (class, income, race, housing . . .) or raise the familiar cry of defence of jobs and services for the mentally ill.

It is harder for mental health workers when in the same breath socialists may indicate political suspicion of their therapeutic practice as bourgeois, individualist, socially controlling, or should you take the step of seeking help with your own stress and suffering, self-indulgent. Ironically, trapped within this double bind and apparently denied any space for political action, mental health workers become occupants of that most bourgeois of psychological prisons — guilt.

As David Berry again hints, the women's movement has been openly engaged for years in coming to terms with similar tensions. While the message may be starting to filter through that personal and political struggles are not mutually exclusive but dialectically linked, its impact on mainstream socialist thinking in mental health has been muted. It should hardly be necessary to argue that there is no more personal experience than mental suffering. But as socialists we have tended to hear far more about the class and socio-economic nature of the problem.

As with physical illness, the distribution of formally recognised mental suffering in society is more or less inversely related to the distribution of income and power, although other variables like sex and race contribute to determining the likelihood that you will be diagnosed as clinically mentally ill sometime in your life. Undoubtedly then, socialist politics and preventative mental health strategies do go hand in hand.

Unfortunately, alleviating the materially deprived circumstances of an acutely depressed or psychotic person is likely to go only a small way to alleviating their mental suffering. Furthermore, a significant proportion of those afflicted with mental illness are from socio-economically privileged backgrounds. Individual psychological problems have an uncanny way of staying lodged with individuals, and seem to call for psychological solutions. For some reason it is this brute fact that so many socialists find it hard to live with. Why?

It is no accident that, as David Berry points out, mental health was last fashionable with the Left during the heyday of 'anti-psychiatry' whose most popular if ultimately misrepresentative slogan was that mental illness doesn't exist. This freed socialists to think about the problem in familiar terms of social control of deviant and anti-social behaviour, to treat mental illness as a myth constructed by ruling class ideologues to marginalise people who consciously, if rather bizarrely, defy capitalism's prescriptions for acceptable behaviour.

The difficulty with this position was two-fold. First, it obliterated from view the pain and suffering of those it celebrated as anti-heroes. Second, it forgot to mention that the subjects of this pain, far from consciously choosing it, experience themselves as frighteningly *out of control* of their psychic lives and behaviour.

Similarly, socialists who scorn psychological and psycho-social explanations of mental illness, and pointing to its socio-economic origins deem these to be the only legitimate object of socialist intervention, ultimately consign the afflicted to a category of helpless victims of social circumstance who have *no* control of personal destiny. Psychotherapies which encourage people to accept responsibility for their own recovery are then mistakenly castigated as victim-blaming.

The psychoanalyst Donald Winnicott quotes a friend as saying 'Mental illness consists in not being able to find anyone who can stand you'. In other words it is almost as painful to witness as it is to experience. In fleeing towards explanations and solutions which deny the immediate reality of mental suffering and the painfulness of working face to face with those in its grip, perhaps socialists are recoiling from their own acute personal and political dilemmas. In my experience socialists are not good at looking into themselves for the source of their difficulties.

Mental illness is nothing but the power of the irrational writ large. We are all afraid of it in ourselves and others. Yet in recent years feminists and to a lesser extent socialists have increasingly acknowledged that unless we grapple with it we are condemned to repeat our mistakes. If we continue to let our ambivalence about open therapeutic engagement with our own and others' mental suffering infect our commitment to change, we impoverish ourselves and abdicate responsibility for an aspect of our humanity which is the right and proper concern of socialism.

Andrew Cooper

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Henry Iles

The death of the lions

Short story by Phil Edwards

SO THERE I WAS, in a lay-by much like any other, rooting through a litterbin. Half an hour's waiting for a lift had left me bored silly and desperate for reading matter — free papers, sports sections, small ads, I'm not proud. All I found was a torn half-sheet, from the front page of one of the nationals I think, covered with a headline:

NO LIONS
HERE!

with, in smaller type, on the second line:

Workers' leader
pledges support

I turned the paper over — nothing there but a big, blurry photo of the Premier visiting a National Training Centre. (Lions?) I drifted back to the roadside, stuck my thumb out, got picked up by a greengrocer's van and forgot all about it between there and the next town.

I was heading for Cambridge at the time — only my third return trip since graduating, it's just a place where I've got some friends these days. This trip had even

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less than usual to do with the call of the alma mater — in fact it had most to do with a call from the BB Inspectors. It was the usual thing: 9.00 sharp two of them come in, one stands by the door and the other does his Friend of the Community act — *good* morning, mind if I sit down, couple of questions, won't take a minute, tell us what you can, off in a tick, leave you in peace. I nodded and smiled as required. Then came the questions: how had I found this flat? what efforts had I made to find the cheapest accommodation available? with what success? Finally, I was informed that in a time of national stringency it ill became any of us to get a free ride on the back of others' hard work and that I had ten days to prove that I was indeed in the cheapest bedsit in Manchester, by the usual method of obtaining a minimum of five signatures of registered landlords to that effect. Or have my benefit docked. Then they checked the room for hidden sources of income, thanked me politely and left.

There's been a lot of this sort of thing lately — the emphasis has been much more on one B than the other, more Basic than Benefit. This accommodation ruling, in particular, is making life tough for us state-subsidised layabouts and scroungers. I'm lucky in that I've been backed by my landlady so far — it's not unusual for a landlady to kick you out if the BB people come round. Not Mrs Turner. I'd been through this once before — a memorable experience, involving collecting local views on whether I had any right not to have a job — and, this time, she undertook to do that part for me.

'I tell you what,' she said, 'I know some of the ladies round here who let rooms, and what I could do, I could go and have a word and see about getting your signatures that way. Would you mind that? Because I think they'd be happier talking to me than you, on the doorstep I mean. And maybe it'd be best if you kept out of the way for a bit, do you think? Stay with a friend or something.'

And God bless Mrs Turner! I thought, Cambridge bound. I was sitting in a café in Leicester, lingering hard. But for her, I thought, I'd have been footing it around South Manchester right now, instead of hitching — getting on the road, meeting people every day, seeing things the locals overlook — it's the only way to travel. One thing I'd seen was still puzzling me: on the outskirts of Leicester, where the houses get fewer and dearer, I'd seen a group of houses, all with gateposts, and each gatepost with a kind of pseudo-heraldic beast carved on top of it. The thing was, none of the animals had a face: not an eye or a nose between them, just flat stone. It was strange and oddly familiar — where had I seen anything like that before? I shrugged and gave it up, concentrating instead on the other Great Unsolved Mystery of the trip. 'NO LIONS HERE!'? There'd been some 'lions' talk just after the previous National Poll, during the power workers' go-slow: one week's Premier's Questions gave rise to some lines like 'Mr Allen may be the king of the beasts in the jungle of industrial relations; that is not to say that he will get the lion's share.'

'And the picture this brought to mind — ordinary people . . . chiselling the faces off stone lions — was so strange it terrified me.'

Government Members went wild, Oppositionists sulked and the papers had a field day — Premier Cracks Whip At Union 'Lions', that kind of thing. Negotiations had broken down again a week back, so maybe that had started this round of lion-baiting. (*Lion-baiting?*)

Then I sat up, suddenly wide awake. Lions on gateposts, faces chipped away. And I knew what they'd reminded me of, too. Norwich Cathedral is full of statuary like that — beautifully crafted saints and martyrs, faceless or headless all. During the Reformation careful, hardworking people went through the cathedral, using hammer and chisel to reduce every graven image they could find to meaningless plaster and wood — diligent vandals with God on their side. And the picture this brought to mind — ordinary people, working perhaps not for God but certainly for common sense, chiselling the faces off stone lions — was so strange it terrified me. I got up, went and got some more coffee, sat down again, thought — what is this? It was as if something were beginning, known to many people but unknown to me; a conspiracy that included everyone but those who had once, deliberately or unknowing, made certain moves, omitted to laugh at certain important jokes, counted themselves out — stirrings in the lake of consensus and, out of the bland stretches of shared belief, something beginning to rise: pages of newsprint changing, with a quick shimmer becoming full of allusions to something about to be told . . . I pulled myself together: there was probably some perfectly reasonable explanation, after all. Eventually I did buy a paper, just to be sure: and the pages were reassuringly reluctant to dissolve into a paranoid haze, and the only feelings they inspired were familiar ones — boredom, distaste, anger without outlet.

I got to Cambridge just after six and walked across town under a deep blue sky. I was going to stay with Michael, an old friend who was doing a second degree and ignoring the University as much as possible. He was sharing what had once been two college servants' houses with two other graduates — Nick, a geographer who was 'looking at things in Spain', and Ros, a mathematician like Michael, whom I wasn't to meet till the next day. The house, I realised when Michael met me at the door, was tiny — and well overstocked with books, papers and general clutter, Michael's room in particular. Michael shut the door behind us, cleared a space on the floor where I could sleep, found homes for the clothes and papers he'd had to shift, threw himself onto his bed and shut his eyes. Then he turned over, opened his eyes, sat up and said:

'Well. How are you then?'

He cooked that evening and then we went out for a drink. Coming back in the eleven o'clock dark of a mild October, picking at an argument we'd been having about the impossibility or not of re-founding the Labour Party, we were passed by a late bus. Something about the advert on the side of the bus caught Michael's eye. 'It was strange, just three words in black, something, something . . . NS. BUTTER NOT GU*NS*? DRAIN THE FE*NS*? HANG ALL DO*NS*?' I didn't say anything.

Michael was asleep. I opened an eye and looked out. The window was uncurtained, and through it I saw a curiously luminous blue night. What would it be like, outside? I closed the eye, lay back, considered. There would be courtyards behind the street, overlooked by green metal verandahs. I listened. In a courtyard down the road a woman was standing in the moonlight, playing the violin — at first scales, then long notes and gracious. Next door, on the other side, an old couple took tea on their verandah: I heard the cups clink and the teapot pouring. They talked a little, quietly. The sky was blue and luminous. The stars shone huge, almost ready to fall.

I woke up late the next day, had a bath — luxury! — and went downstairs. While I was drinking coffee to the sound of the radio news — a new poll giving the National Alliance 68 per cent support, a wildcat strike at one of the reactors — a tall, dark-haired woman walked in, poured herself some coffee and sat down.

'Hi! I'm Ros — oh yes, Phil, I've heard of you. So what brings you this way?'

I told her the whole sorry story. Apparently things weren't too hot in Cambridge either — people having their grants cut for being seen on demos, leftists going over to the National Alliance, police raids on bookshops 'and, as ever, dons standing up and saying they can't see what all the fuss is about. The atmosphere's getting really nasty. Actually, what really got me was when someone called me a lioness — what's that supposed to mean? I

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know it wasn't a compliment, not that that bothers me — I just don't like feeling I've missed out on something!'

Repressing the idea of telling her everything I'd thought on the subject, I said:

'Speaking of missing out, do you know anything about some union leader "pledging support" for something?'

She grimaced, but only said, 'Ah yes, Gill.'

'Gill? You mean he's said something against the USSR? That *would* be —' Ros cut me off.

'At a rally in Sheffield a week back, he pledged his support and the union's for . . . "the encouragement of competition, the spirit of self-reliance and plain hard work, the only cures for the present ills of our once great nation".' She grinned. 'I remember it well!'

'*Gill?*'

'I know, it's like the Pope doing an advert for — hey, is that clock right? I'm taking a supervision at half past. Right, well —' she picked up a folder from on top of the fridge and a jacket from the back of a chair, and made for the door — 'See you!'

A bit after one Michael came in for lunch. Then, as it was fine and he had the afternoon free, we went for a wander around town. Everything looked just how I remembered it — and I wondered about this, wondered whose business it was keeping it that way. King's College, the Senate House, Great St Mary's all seemed hollow, somehow, like plastic models of themselves — a show set up for the tourists . . .

'What do you think of that?'

Michael's voice brought me back to earth. We'd come to the Grosvenor Centre area and he was pointing at a hoarding: white paper, heavy black letters saying

THIS IS OUR LAND

'Well!'

We discussed that poster most of the way back — who had paid for it? We decided it was either a recruiting drive for one of the fascist parties or a marketing campaign for a new pop group ('Spot the difference!' — Michael).

We spent that evening listening to Bach, drinking through a gallon of cider and talking about Life. Not life, just Life.

'Funny to think Wordsworth saw the French Revolution,' Ros remarked at one point.

'Mm,' I considered. 'But then, the Romantic thing — it wasn't only rhetoric: it was a matter of getting people back to the natural state, remaking society so that people could live as naturally as — well, as animals, I suppose. . .'

'Which as we know don't have any problems,' said Michael. 'Animals aren't even *conscious*, so how on earth you can base political theory on making everyone like that —'

'OK,' I said. 'Sure. Thing is — not to confuse the kind of alienation that's just being human — consciousness, language, rape and murder— not to confuse that with the result of living in an alienating society. Said confusion probably, really, why Wordsworth wound up a Tory.' I poured the cider. Ros said, 'Aren't they the same thing? Murder, rape — I mean, show me an un-alienated rapist! No, they've got to be related at least.'

'So we can learn from the animals?' Michael wasn't convinced.

'Depends.' She considered. 'You wouldn't learn much from a Pavlov's dog, or a circus lion.'

'Hmm.' Either Michael was satisfied with this or he was getting bored. Whichever, we all went to bed soon after that. I lay awake for a while, listening but hearing nothing. This is our land, I thought. Yahoohay.

'PHIL!' Wake up? Oh well — I rose to the surface, blinking.

'It's for you,' said Michael, 'someone on the phone — dearest time of day — come on!'

'Yeah.' I shoved myself out of bed, down the stairs, into the front door, picked up the phone — 'hallo?'

It was Mrs Turner. I'd have to come back. The Inspectors had been. I'd have to start again, get my own signatures. A week left. Yes, as quickly as I could. Bye then . . . and damn, damn, damn! I was going back to a week's door-knocking, possibly under surveillance. I might lose the accommodation element of my Basic Benefit, and then it was night shelters and £2 a day here I come. And there was no appeal — no one to argue with, or even accuse. Damn, damn, damn.

I went upstairs, washed, dressed, came down for breakfast. 'Well John,' remarked the radio, 'this is an unofficial strike with a difference!' I made myself some toast and told Michael what I'd just heard. Ros came in, then, and sat drinking coffee for a while. Then she said,

'Animals aren't even *conscious*, so how on earth you can base political theory on making everyone like that —'

'You're going?'

'Afraid so.'

'Well. Good luck.'

'Thanks.' I put my pack on. 'Bye then — I'll try and write this time. Bye Ros — see you again. Bye!' And I went.

I saw a bus like the one Michael had noticed as I left Cambridge. The message was

KILL THE LIONS

I saw quite a few of these slogans — posters, adverts on buses, a commercial on 27 TVs in a rental shop in Derby (THIS LAND IS OURS, that one). There were some weird ones, too:

THE NEIGHBOURHOOD IS STRENGTH
YOUR FAMILY HAS RIGHTS
WE ARE THE NATION
NO MORE BETRAYAL

The commonest of all, though, was

KILL THE LIONS

Who *was* putting them up? I wondered, walking out of Macclesfield at a dark six o'clock the next day. Not the Government — it was ages to the next Poll — but if not them . . . I dropped it, concentrating on looking law-abiding as a large Policemobile swept past.

Just after that I got a lift into Manchester. I got talking to the driver, who brought me up to date on the power workers' action.

'Did you not know? National power cut tonight, eight to eleven. Department of Security say everything's under control and insurrectionists and wreckers will feel the full weight of the law and reserve generators will be pulled in as needed — I know, it's the first I've heard of them. Anyway, I don't know who's supposed to be running them — the Army? Everyone who could do it'll be out. They seem to think they can keep things going regardless of the people who do the work. "Lions on the rampage", it said in the paper. We'll see.'

So there I was, a bit before eight, walking down the Wilmslow Road towards the street where I lived. Only a couple of the posters this side of town; I'd just passed one that said ON YOUR FEET! Me, I'd been on my feet for the last hour — what about PUT YOUR FEET UP, or GET THE TEA ON? Something caught my eye at the end of my street, bulky, scruffy in the lamplight, like a big sack or an old rug — odd . . . But then the lights went off, and the stars came out.

I had never seen so many stars. They shone huge, in a blue and strangely luminous sky. I stood, gazing — and it all vanished: the streetlights sprang back on, the sky was dull and brown again. A minute passed, and the lights were dim; two — the lights guttered . . . the lights were out, and I walked on under the beautiful sky. The power workers, I thought. They're using their strength. We can make things change. We can start fighting back.

In darkness and starlight I turned into my street. And there I came face to face with the look and smell and the dead nobility, the fur, the mane, the heavy stiff body I'd seen and not recognised from down the road. I stood looking at it for a while, unable to think. Then I walked round a parked car and into the road, and looked along the street. There was a lion hung from every lamp-post. □

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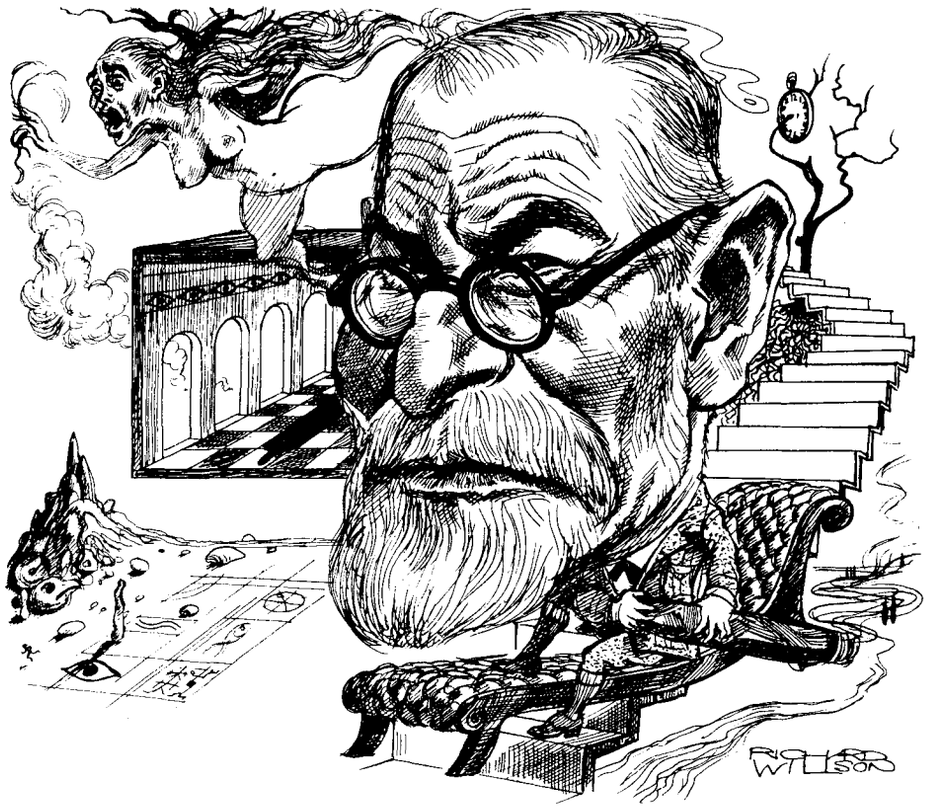

Bewitched, belated or bewildered

Paul Roazen

Freud and the Humanities
ed. PEREGRINE HORDERN *Duckworth* £18
Freud for Historians
PETER GAY *Oxford* £16.50
The Freud Scenario
JEAN-PAUL SARTRE ed. QUINTIN HOARE
Verso £16.95

THE WIDESPREAD influence of Sigmund Freud's work has meant that the literature on psychoanalysis continues to multiply. The extensiveness of the available knowledge only underlines how embarrassing each of these books is in its conception.

Freud and the Humanities consists of a series of seven Chichele lectures given at All Souls College in Oxford during 1984. The individual contributors were supposed to trace Freud's impact on aspects of the arts and the humanities. In the course of this meritorious project each of the lecturers makes a number of worth-while observations. Freud had predicted that the 'decisive struggle' over psychoanalysis would take place at the ancient centres of culture, and therefore the existence of this lecture series is a sign that Freud has at least temporarily succeeded in coming into his own at Oxford. Although a sister-in-law of Virginia Woolf taught psychoanalytic concepts at Cambridge as early as the 1920s, on the whole Oxford has successfully resisted the invasion of ideas associated with Freud's system of thought.

The editor's Introduction is, however, an amateurish piece of work. When he maintains that 'the seven essays collected here form part of a far larger enterprise that, despite the volume of commentary psychoanalysis has engendered, is only now beginning in scholarly and critical earnest', one rubs one's eyes in disbelief. The critical literature about Freud has been accumulating now for almost one hundred years. Can it seriously be suggested that in this past century writers have not known something of what they were talking about? The lectures themselves are far too slight to bear out the purpose the editor claims for them. Serious yet respectful criticisms of Freud and his ideas have been available for generations, and one would have thought that any historian of ideas would be aware of the prior literature on the subject.

It is simply not accurate to state, as the editor does in his Introduction, that the 'neo-Freudians' took 'their cue from the schismatic Alfred Adler'. It is true that there are analogies in the ideas of Freudian revisionists to the 'heresies' of both Jung and Adler, but that does not prove any historical influence was necessarily at work.

Despite the naive conceptual underpinning offered to *Freud and the Humanities*, some of the lectures, particularly those by Charles Rycroft, Anthony Storr and Richard Ellmann, make sophisticated reading. But if All Souls College wanted to correct an imbalance at Oxford in the appreciation of the importance of Freud for the arts and the humanities, more attention should have been paid to how to make a coherent whole for purposes of a book out of seven such disparate contributions.

Peter Gay's **Freud for Historians** reflects a different kind of naiveté, one that stems from America's over-enthusiasm for all things associated with psychoanalysis. He proceeds as if there were no reasonable grounds for historians ever having suspected that psychoanalytic reasoning could be based on faulty evidence. Gay is a harsh critic of all historians — and the list is an impressive one — who have ever recently questioned the use of psychoanalysis in history. The result is that Gay's well-written book amounts to a polemic on behalf of the use of Freud by historians.

The problem is not so much that Gay ignores the well-known extravagances connected with the use of Freud. He is basically sound in arguing that all social scientists function with a more or less implicit theory of human nature, and he is right in proposing that Freud offers a permanent challenge to writers of history. It should be to Freud's credit as a figure in Western intellectual history that he constructed a moral system as well, but Gay seems oblivious to the ethical dimensions of psychoanalysis.

A special difficulty comes in when Gay recommends, as some kind of neutral scientific doctrine, the so-called findings of Freud and his psychoanalytic followers. Any independent observer would realise that the journal articles Gay mentions with such enthusiasm are written by a dreary, unimaginative lot without a fraction of Gay's own education. At no point does Gay stand back and use his critical tools on the psychoanalytic literature itself, although he can be tough as nails on his fellow historians. If Gay lets his psychoanalytic allies off scot-free, it sounds like he is proselytising on behalf of a new-found religion. As a matter of fact, the tone of the book would make better sense if it had appeared a generation ago. Reading it now makes Gay sound a reactionary force writing in defence of psychoanalytic orthodoxy, like a rear-guard fighter working on behalf of trade-union privileges that have long been seriously in question.

The publication of Sartre's **The Freud Scenario** is a reflection of the current French enchantment with Freud. It would be worthwhile to try and examine what Sartre found in Freud, and why he discarded what he did. The fashions in Paris have left Sartre behind lately, and he is not being adequately credited with having been sophisticated about psychoanalytic issues.

In 1958 John Huston commissioned Sartre to write a screenplay about Freud; he found Sartre's proposal unusable, and Sartre came back with an even longer proposal. In the end Sartre's name was not listed in the credits for the Freud movie which starred Montgomery Clift (a film which Anna Freud spoke out against at the British Psychoanalytic Society). Over 500 pages of Sartre's scripts, which is what makes up *The Freud Scenario*, require an editorial apparatus indicating much more about what Sartre was up to here; the editor is thoroughly at home with both Freud and Sartre, and one only wishes he had had more

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space to be less cryptic about his subject matter. As it is few will read these screenplays about Freud, but students of Sartre will no doubt someday elucidate the full meaning of his version of Freud.

Freud's influence today extends over British, American and French culture, but it would take a careful student of comparative culture to describe in exactly what ways the reception of psychoanalysis has differed in each of these countries. □

No why

Michael Goldfarb

At Mother's Request
JONATHAN COLEMAN *Hamish Hamilton* £14.95

MURDER IN the United States is a common occurrence. More than 21,000 are committed every year. That's a fair amount of mayhem. Not every killing is front page news and a dismaying number don't get solved.

However, the 1978 murder of Franklin Bradshaw, subject of Jonathan Coleman's lengthy book, is an example of the kind of murder that gets headlines and causes publishers to come up with big advances.

Here are the facts: Bradshaw, one of the richest men in Utah, was shot to death by his grandson, Marc, acting on the orders of his mother, Bradshaw's youngest daughter, Frances. It took more than four years before the murderers were arrested, tried and convicted.

The story of the Bradshaw family's disintegration says a great deal about greed. It is also instructive about the volatile psychological dynamics of a family where the parents have nothing in common except their loathing for each other.

At the time of his death Bradshaw was worth more than a $100 million yet he still worked in his rundown auto-parts warehouse in a skid row section of Salt Lake. At the time of her arrest Frances was on the Board of Directors of George Balanchine's New York City Ballet and living in one of the most exclusive co-op apartment buildings in New York.

Franklin Bradshaw was an eccentric out of the Howard Hughes mould. His briefcase was an old Coors beer carton scavenged from a trash bin. He wrote his letters on scraps of paper torn from letters he received. His auto parts business was successful enough but he made his big money parlaying an interest in geology and applying it to oil leases throughout the petroleum-rich Rocky Mountain Basin.

From the beginning, Franklin and Berenice Bradshaw were two people emphatically not made for each other. Franklin was from old Mormon stock, a native Utahn, frugal, stiff-necked and single-mindedly dedicated to making his own way. Berenice was a non-Mormon in that harshly parochial state, intensely social, skittish and determined to be someone. After they started their family (the first three kids born in three and a half years during the Great Depression) she determined to live through them.

The strain on the children was evident. The oldest, Robert, suffered from violent seizures and was eventually lobotomised. Despite his father's wealth he spent his final years in state hospitals. The middle daughter, Elaine, was bedridden for two years after Berenice wilfully ignored symptoms of rheumatic fever.

Then there was Frances, whose birth seven years after Elaine's caused Berenice to have a breakdown. Frances burst away from provincial Utah to the heart of the sophisticated East Coast to attend élite Bryn Mawr College. She was thrown out for forging classmates' cheques and stealing.

Throughout his family's travails Bradshaw stayed in his warehouse, paying the bills and bemoaning the impending trip to the poorhouse.

Ignoring Frances was a fatal mistake. She was a person to whom no one said no. Not her parents, not her children, not her neighbours. She lived in high style in New York browbeating her parents for hundreds of thousands of dollars and when Bradshaw wouldn't come through she embezzled it or stole it.

She had two sons by her first marriage whom she abused physically and psychologically. Yet they tried desperately to retain her favour. It was her younger son Marc's fear of being locked out of the house as his older brother had been that led him to do his mother's bidding and murder his grandfather.

They very nearly got away with it and would have had it not been for dogged police work and the willingness of Frances's sister Marilyn to incur her mother's wrath and help the police investigate her sister.

This is painful, ugly and rich material.

Sadly, Coleman, a television journalist, has neither the psychological acumen nor the literary skill to illuminate this tale. What he has is the reporter's doggedness in accumulating facts. The book is overstuffed with them. His data are not presented in any social context. The key relationship in the family, that of Frances and Berenice, is documented not explained.

Coleman does offer a concluding section in which he assesses the family from a Freudian psychological viewpoint. But the murder of Franklin Bradshaw is not to be understood in terms of unresolved Oedipal conflicts. The line of psychosis in the family from the lobotomised son to the violent hallucinations of the oldest grandson hints at hereditary psychobiological problems. Frances acted out her social pathology far beyond the family structure and no one stopped her. After 600 pages of facts one still asks, why?

Coleman's inability to understand his story in a larger social context means he misses a chance to draw two conclusions about American life. First, the great American Tragedy, constantly repeated, is the disintegration of the family in the face of the single-minded pursuit of wealth. Second, that in the US at least, if you are rich enough and reasonably attractive you can be a murderous psychotic and no one will do much about it. Until it is too late. □

FICTION

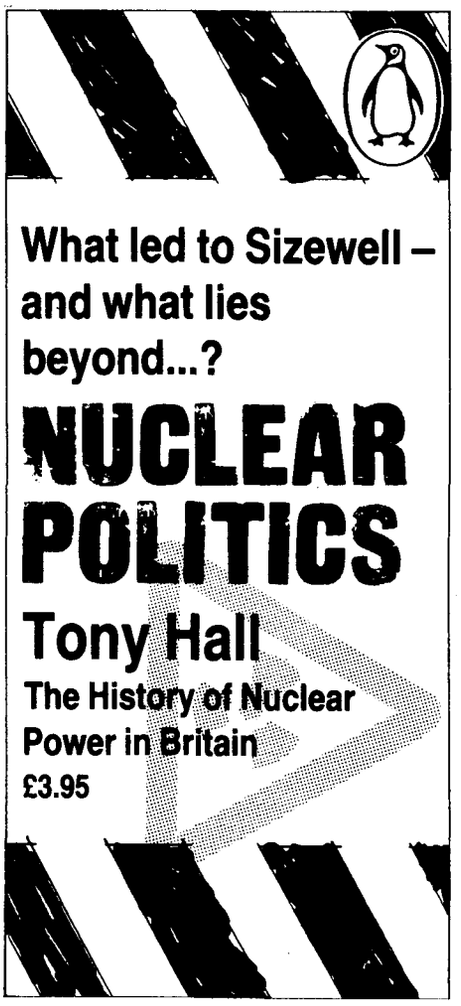
Thatcher's kids

John Clute

The Last Election
PETE DAVIES *Deutsch* £8.95
Paradise
HUGH FLEETWOOD *Hamish Hamilton* £9.95
Floral Street
SIMON BURT *Faber* £9.95 & £3.95

IT WOULD BE a shame to dismiss Pete Davies's first novel out of hand, just because it is something of a shambles. **The Last Election** may be quite a bit too long. It may be misshapen with anger and a marshmallow centre may somewhat vitiate that abiding rage. There may be too many characters in the book and too many of them may boast fatally distancing *commedia dell' arte* names like Wasted and Grief and Crinkly Crisp and Bludge. And clearly Davies likes Grief too much and Crinkly Crisp too little for both to exist comfortably in the same book. But, as a vision of terminal political nightmare in the UK, *The Last Election* scores deep into the reader's mind.

Nanny has been Prime Minister for a very long time. There is no manufacturing base at



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all left in England, though there's lots of television snooker and sex. The BBC has been privatised, as have the police, though both institutions remain tools of Nanny's Money Party. The old and the unemployed infest the devastated inner cities; drugs and the media keep them quiet. The Money Party has called an election. It will be a formality.

Pete Davies must have delivered his manuscript long before Mrs Thatcher knighted her make-up man and it can be seen as a modest confirmation of his skill in targetting that the last election campaign is created and brought to its apocalyptic conclusion by advertising czar Crinkly Crisp. Nanny herself, with her hard bright hair and polished face, is senile, a Punch and Judy grotesque. Crinkly is the logical consequence of Nanny and it is to Crinkly's loathsome beck that the abject inhabitants of Davies's Britain must submit.

As a verbal analogue of *Spitting Image* or Steve Bell's *If . .*, *The Last Election* glows with an unstoppable phosphorescence, gutsy, scatological, unswerving. Only when Davies gets locked into his storyline does the savagery of his vision become distorted. Media-hypester Grief's scientist friend Moses has invented a painkiller which, it soon turns out, grants not only beatitude but premature ageing and death as well. Nanny is feeding the new drug to the aged, the sick and the unemployed. Grief and some implausibly warm-hearted, decent allies try to expose the government, emitting a fine line of moral disgust as they plot, uselessly, away. The climax, created by the media, is an apocalypse whose effect may be meant as tragic, but which reads as merely frenzied. Which is too bad. Before the paranoia and the gimmickry set in, *The Last Election* had already won its case.

There is no way that a title like **Paradise** can fail to promise a very great deal. In Hugh Fleetwood's eleventh novel, which is very short, it stands for childhood as experienced by the 12-year-old who narrates the story; for childhood as experienced by those who corrupt young Peter; for the expatriate colony in Italy where two murders and this loss of childhood coincide; and for poor Europa herself, the high tide of civilisation receding like a golden childhood. It all takes place about 20 years ago; now a professional crime novelist, Peter sets down his memories of the disastrous summer of his 13th birthday; because the serpent in Paradise, the lesbian murderer who seduces him, has just died, he is free to speak, to ruminate.

In a syntax that does rather chew the cud, and constantly distances the reader from the earlier self Peter is trying to recreate, a slow, morbid, melancholy tale slowly untangles itself from the opening chapters. Peter's expatriate Italy begins to glow autumnally. Two-thirds through, by means of a striking nautical image, Peter likens the first murdered woman with a modern Europe similarly dead in spirit, and the whole novel comes together with an almost audible click. What had previously seemed desultory and strangulated in the book now reads as an adult's crafty management of unassuageable grief. For the Paradise that has been lost is not only childhood, but also a world in which anything like Paradise could possibly be built. Nanny is just around the corner.

A similar sense of desolation pervades the wide range of stories assembled in **Floral Street**, Simon Burt's first book and an extremely strong one. The title story was acclaimed on its first publication in *Mae West is Dead*, a 1983 anthology of lesbian and gay fiction, and reads all the more effectively in the company of its stablemates. Of them all, 'Floral Street' is perhaps the neatest demonstration of Burt's singular strengths as a writer. The story is swift, complex, knowing; the spare, heightened dialogue can be instantly recognised as Burt's own, though it is at times reminiscent of both John O'Hara and Ivy Compton-Burnett; like the latter, also, is Burt's use of islanded prose paragraphs which function as stage directions and as anchors.

The plot is already notorious. A 36-year-old man, with an adolescent son and a female lover, combines a daytime job as teacher in a South London school with pornographic photo sessions at night; as a birthday present, his son turns up as his partner for one of these sessions, and is accepted by his dad. On the surface it is a nasty and impertinent piece of work. But it does not read as either nasty or impertinent.

Burt's real coup in 'Floral Street' lies in the almost secret warmth he feels for his protagonist. As with him, so with most actors in *Floral Street*. In a world of solitude and loss, they make do. They achieve something like *sprezzatura*, grace under pressure. It is true that they are awaiting Nanny, and that their political blankness paves the road for her pernicious triumphalism; but it is perhaps illicit to bemoan people's failure to save the world as well as themselves. There is a clear, cold, unblinking strength to the work of Simon Burt. He tells us to be brave, as night falls. □

Empire blues

Francis Wheen

The Games Ethic and Imperialism
J. A. MANGAN *Viking* £14.95

DR MANGAN has bowled us a bit of a long-hop here. His previous book, *Athleticism in the Victorian and Edwardian Public School*, was an original and fascinating account of how athleticism became a fully-fledged ideology in the British ruling class. He has now followed this with a study of how that ideology was exported to the Empire. Good idea. But something's gone wrong.

The problem is that the book doesn't live up to its title. In his introduction, Dr Mangan argues quite reasonably that the games ethic was widely believed to promote 'not simply initiative and self-reliance but also loyalty and obedience. It was, therefore, a useful instrument of colonial purpose'. Yet in the body of the book this central point is only fleetingly glimpsed. Instead, each of the book's seven chapters reads like a self-contained essay, unrelated to any other chapter or to the concept of the book as a whole. The proportion of the book that actually deals with the 'games ethic' of the title is small. Instead, we are given great bundles of material about imperialism which is all very interesting but is not, for the most part, related specifically to athleticism.

Even when it is, Dr Mangan sometimes gets himself into a right old muddle. A whole chapter is devoted to the Sudan Political Service. Why? Well, because staff of the service were often recruited on the strength of their sporting achievements at Oxbridge, so much so that the Sudan became known as 'the Land of Blacks ruled by Blues'. Dr Mangan's problem is that he can't decide whether he agrees with this assessment or not. It contained 'more than a grain of a truth' but was nevertheless 'something of an exaggeration'. He worries away at it for page after page, even going so far as to conduct a statistical analysis which reveals that of the 281 Oxbridge graduates recruited to the Service, 71 had 'blues'. He concludes weakly that 'the necessity of obtaining a "blue" has been somewhat exaggerated'; on the other hand, 'there can be no doubt . . . that the successful athlete was favoured'. *Parturient montes . . .*

Another irritating feature of the book is Dr Mangan's passion for ending sentences with exclamation marks! Hardly a page goes by without another shriek mark being flung in! I thought Viking employed editors to weed out this sort of thing!

Still, I don't mean to suggest that the book is worthless. It may be a slighter work than its predecessor, and its title may be misleading, but there is much fascinating evidence between its covers. Dr Mangan has a genius for digging up old sermons, books and school magazines, which are always good value. Here, for instance, is *The Haileyburian*'s obituary for an old boy killed in Burma: 'He will be chiefly remembered as having presented the Quarter-Mile Challenge Cup. He was at Balliol College, Oxford, for a year and a half; he rowed in his College eight and distinguished himself on the towing path. Eventually he went abroad, and met his death bravely.' Even more impressive is the *Eton Chronicle*'s account of the end of Lieutenant Elwes, who fell at the battle of Laing's Nek during the first Boer War after calling to a brother officer: 'Come along Monck, *Floreat Etona*, we must be in the front rank.'

Best of all is the last chapter, 'Christ and the Imperial Games Fields', in which the main figure is Cecil Earle Tyndale-Biscoe, a gloriously bizarre character who ran the Church Missionary School at Srinagar, Kashmir, from 1890 to 1947 and introduced football, cricket, rowing, swimming, boxing and much else to the Brahmin youths of Kashmir. Dr Mangan seems to have something of a soft spot for Tyndale-Biscoe, and it isn't hard to see why. For one thing, Tyndale-Biscoe wasn't an entirely orthodox disciple of Victorian athleticism. During service with the Punjab volunteers he once successfully dressed up as an old woman and discovered the disposition of the enemy — only to be reprimanded by his commanding officer for 'not really playing the game'. □

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Shorter reviews

Randall Jarrell's Letters
ed. MARY JARRELL *Faber* £25

As a conversationalist, Randall Jarrell disdained gossip, sexual innuendo and bad language. That the last two qualities are also absent from these letters — 'an autobiographical and literary selection' of 350 from 2,500 recovered — hardly matters; unfortunately, Jarrell's abstinence from gossip is largely carried over as well. Slighting references to particular *bêtes noires* do appear, along with some tart portraits and lit-critical opinions, but there is scarcely anything remotely revelatory about the writer himself or about celebrated friends like Robert Lowell, Peter Taylor, Allen Tate, John Berryman and Hannah Arendt.

Disappointingly, too, Taylor (his closest friend) is not among the rather small circle of correspondents, having withheld those letters in his possession (a loss the editor acknowledges as 'grievous'). When Jarrell's reserve does slip, the editor — his second wife — substitutes her own: missing, for example, are all but the 'most autobiographical and literary' portions of his love-letters. Mind you, much of the hard information available here does occur in her admirable linking passages and annotations. These are notably valuable concerning the mental collapse for which Jarrell was undergoing treatment when he died, in a road accident, in 1965.

The volume does provide an accurate guide to the course Jarrell's career took, opening in 1935 with him, at 21, already a published poet and reviewer, closing shortly before his death. In between, the record is one of success, as both poet and critic, unbroken even by wartime military service: he was never posted abroad and continued publishing throughout. Success also came as an academic, as a novelist, a translator, an anthologist, a children's writer. While shoptalk abounds, though, few real insights emerge. Since 1965, Jarrell's stock — particularly as a poet — has declined markedly. These letters are unlikely to initiate any spectacular rehabilitation, but they could serve a useful purpose by broadening interest in the excellent criticism for which he is now chiefly remembered.

David Montrose

Rebel Radio
JOHN HIND & STEPHEN MOSCO *Pluto* £3.95

Producing a book about an activity as precarious and transient as pirate broadcasting must be a little like trying to write on water. As soon as you start describing the virtues of one station, its operators are likely to be raided, only to re-appear days later under a different name and using new equipment. As Hind and Mosco explain, setting up a pirate station involves remarkably little in the way of technology: the much-lamented Dread Broadcasting Corporation (where Radio One's Miss P made her name) broadcast over a radius of some 20 miles, using an ordinary cassette player, a length of wire and a transmitter small enough to fit in a biscuit tin. In common with other pirates, the DBC team seem to have spent most of their time and energy in avoiding detection by Home Office staff — it's an offence even to listen to a pirate.

So far, the medium has been dominated by music enthusiasts catering for what are supposed to be 'minority' tastes. Speech-oriented programming has fared less well, for obvious reasons — spinning discs generally requires a lot less planning and money. The political pirates which have so far taken to the air (for instance, the short-lived but notorious Radio Arthur, which broadcast in Nottinghamshire during the coal strike) have rarely risen above the level of amateurish propaganda. The book devotes much space to the failure of London's Our Radio, an attempt at agit-prop broadcasting which sounds like a Dave Spart parody.

Hind and Mosco avoid making too many firm predictions about the future of the pirates. Much, of course, depends on how the community radio licences are shared out. Overall, *Rebel Radio* is a well-researched and entertaining read which keeps a close grip on the facts.

Clive Davis

Here to Go: Planet R-101 and **The Process**
BRION GYSIN (interviewed by TERRY WILSON)
Quartet £12.50 and £8.95 respectively

Both of these welcome reprints from Quartet are books that transcribe voices. Gysin's novel is structured by the various taped voices which speak through a narrating I. While the interviews, which are illustrated by Terry Wilson's superb selection of pictures and rare texts, convey the arch and saucy flavour of Gysin's monologues. More than a painter or a writer, Gysin is also a marvellous raconteur.

After exhibiting with the Surrealists at only 19 and working for Irene Sharaff on Broadway, he was led in 1950 by Paul Bowles to Tangier, where he opened the 1001 Nights restaurant for the celebrated Master Musicians of Joujouka. After Morocco came the Beat Hotel years in Paris, where he began his collaborations with William Burroughs and developed the magical-technological method of the Cut-ups. Gysin saw their random montage as a sublime joke, while Burroughs promptly (and successfully) chopped up all his manuscripts — wherein lies the difference between the two men.

The implication of *Here To Go* is that it was in Gysin's calligraphic sorcery, with its cabbalistic grids and flickering images, that Burroughs recognised the nature of his own literary experiments. Apart from its wide range of subjects, the interview captures the aura of Gysin's personality and the gossipy virtuosity of his charm as he discusses magic, music, language and art. And thanks to Wilson's interleaving of key texts by Burroughs and Gysin, it is also an essential source-book on their colourful careers.

As for *The Process*, I recall once being lent a precious copy for *three* days — and I doubt if its true rarity will be eroded by its new-found obtainability; it is a minor masterpiece. Gysin's kif-induced journey through the Saharan wastes has the imaginative force of Calvino's *Invisible Cities*, as well as a feeling for the psychological traps of the desert that rivals Bowles at his very best. Gysin is as tricksy as Cagliostro, *The Process* as entrancing and enchanting as Borges at his most mysterious or Castaneda at his most playful.

Oliver Harris

Artisans, Peasants and Proletarians
ed. CLIVE EMSLEY and JAMES WALVIN
Croom Helm £19.95

This is a collection of essays presented to Gwyn Williams, one of the most exciting and original historical thinkers of the post-war world. Like many such collections, it is made up of essays by ex-pupils presented in homage to the 'master' and his work. The range of pieces in the book is wide, covering the period from the mid-18th to the late-19th centuries and moving, geographically, from America to Germany via England and, correctly, Wales. If the book has a core it is in varieties of popular radicalism.

To an extent these essays show Williams's influence and interest; what is sad is that few of them show his methodological inventiveness. The excitement and power of the work of many of the post-war generation of Marxist writers, and Williams's above all others, has been in their willingness to challenge not only what constituted the subject matter of history but *how* history should actually be written. This lesson has not been learned by most of Gwyn Williams's pupils represented in this book. For the most part the articles rely on an interplay of narrative and analysis of the kind that has dominated historical writing for decades.

For this reason the exceptions stand out. Dai Smith's exciting, if uneven, account of the work of the Welsh novelist Gwyn Thomas and his relation to both the politics of history and the politics of the 1930s shows how 'literature' and 'history' can be made to fit together as equals rather than one using the other. Similarly David Vincent's article on the 'penny post' and the working class shows fine inventiveness and opens up a whole new areas of thought about working-class culture, and that by John Breuilly is a fascinating exercise in comparative history. It remains sad though that the collection as whole is still so much part of the mainstream of historical writing, decent as that is, at a time when the Left needs again to take up the challenge of the writing of history on its terrain, not on that of the academy.

Alun Howkins

All in a whirl over Westland?
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POETRY

Tones of voice

John Lucas

Katerina Brac
CHRISTOPHER REID *Faber* £8.95 & £3.95
The Lame Waltzer
MATTHEW SWEENEY *Allison & Busby* £4
The Berlin Wall Café
PAUL DURCAN *Blackstaff* £4.95
Skevington's Daughter
OLIVER REYNOLDS *Faber* £8.95 & £3.95
Standing Female Nude
CAROL ANN DUFFY *Anvil* £3.95

THE POEMS of **Katerina Brac** have that slightly washed-out fastidiousness that you expect from good translations of European poetry. They also have about them a hint of menaced lives, of separations, of the machinery of state operating in ever-present, malign ways — of helicopters clattering over rooftops, 'a salvo of blurred words/from the oracular in lily/on top of the olive-green van' — that characterise the police state. In other words, this is pastiche with a purpose. What purpose? A secret narrative, perhaps, a *samizdat* poetry that smuggles out hints of terror, of life lived in the interstices, of the joys that feel the keener because they are so fugitive. Not *quite* Thatcher's Britain, but not that far removed, either.

> Once again, magically
> and without official notification,
> it was the time of the year
> for the pale-blue butterflies to arrive.

Offical notification is something we know about, yet the slight strangeness of 'the time of the year' — English idiom does without the second article — keeps this experience at a distance, a matter to be guessed at, inferred.

It may be for this reason that when I came to re-read the volume I was slightly disappointed. That it is very clever I have no doubt; and Reid so cunningly deploys near clichés that you have reluctantly to admit — 'well, yes, this is what even the best translaterese can seem like' (e.g of 'The Sea', 'I was stirred by it to a vague romantic ecstasy'). But I was reminded of Irving Howe's remark about the *Princess Casamassima*, 'Everything is prepared for but little is revealed.' Still I know that this may be unfair or that, to come clean about my misgivings, Reid's Jamesian velleities, his sly suggestions of enormities for which no words adequately exist, no cadences do service may be as properly elusive as teasingly empty. It's probably a matter of temperament that I feel, lurking in the corner of my mind, a small, ungrateful whisper that says '*so what?*' And against this I need to set one or two poems that are charged with just the right *frisson* — 'An Angel', 'Tin Lily', 'A Box' (This last reminiscent of some of the poems that Ritsos wrote during the Greek Civil War, when he was sent into internal exile.)

Matthew Sweeney's **The Lame Waltzer** is his third volume and his best so far. Where he had previously kept his poems on such a tight rein that they'd seemed more or less throttled, he now lets the best of them pursue their own course. The result is an exuberantly witty volume, which pushes well beyond the limits of a cagey and caged ordinariness from which the poems frequently start and to which they occasionally return. Thus the 'Boys in the Backroom':

> Lean on a wall and talk about gold —
> a blinding, twelve inch golden disk.
> When they have it they will smash it
> or melt it down to a yellow ball
> to heave at a politician's window.

The boys in the backroom aren't boffins, or alchemists — or rather, their hopes of transformation are those of any aspiring rock group. The dreams of such fanatics end as they must when they have to 'take off behind the disused bar/and set the lightbulb dancing.' What I like about this and other such poems is that Sweeney's wit isn't exploitative: he doesn't sneer, condescend to or sell his urban-ordinary subject matter short. This is not to say that he's at all mushy. On the contrary, his wit can be sharp: 'The muffled reporter . . ./won't find a story here, not unless/she imagines well and wields a grudge/and she's much too ambitious for that.' It is, however, to say that when he's in this vein Sweeney imagines well because he's almost in love with what he creates. The same can't be said of the poems which smoulder with scarcely contained violence, but then I don't think that they are so successful. Or is it that I've read too many poems by contemporary Irish poets that anticipate Sweeney's 'Sarsaparilla', 'A Surrey Morning' and 'The Night Post'? At all events, he's at his best when he doesn't seem to be coming from behind such poets.

I can imagine it being said that Paul Durcan is the original source for the side of Sweeney that I prefer. Certainly Durcan, whose previous volume, *Jumping the Train Tracks With Angela*, I much admire, is a zestfully inventive, slightly pop-eyed narrator of tall tales. You could trace *his* source back to — oh, back to Miles na Gopaleen, I suppose. But I'm not sure that it makes much sense to do this for so original a poet, even though I don't think the **Berlin Wall Café** shows him at his best. It's divided into two halves: the first contains tales and satires on (mostly) Irish life which, funny though they often are, also use knockabout humour that can be surprisingly clumsy. No doubt when they are read aloud you don't much notice the dud lines — there's likely to be a good one coming up next. On the page, however, the awkwardnesses won't go away. They affect even so disarming a tale as 'The Haulier's Wife Meets Jesus on the Road Near Moone', which is surely altogether too roguish? The second half of the book deals with the break-up of a marriage and, although not offered as confession or therapy, it feels disappointingly slack. I except 'The Pieta's Over' — just ('A Man cannot be a messiah for ever,/Messiahing about in his wife's lap') — and 'The Day My Wife Purchased Herself a Handgun'. But Durcan's healthy anti-poetical stance is in danger of hardening into a fixed pose, a lack of care for which the button-holing charm can't make up.

No such danger about Oliver Reynolds's first volume. **Skevington's Daughter** is altogether tauter, more laconic, cool. It opens with a poem so good that everything coming after it in the volume is bound to feel anti-climactic. 'Victoriana' is about a visit paid by the OED's Dr Murray to one of his contributors, who turns out to be a madman, incarcerated in Broadmoor. Reynolds's handling of the narrative and his exact care for detail are quite masterly and the book would be worth buying for that one poem alone. Still *Skevington's Daughter* is by no means a one-poem book. I didn't so much like the middle section, called 'Album', perhaps because the writing here feels at once knowing and gratuitously willed, as in 'Little Ease', where the subject of a photograph stands beside the torture instrument after which the volume is named:

> Lubricious brass winks at iron.
> Julie stands by the daughter,
> A grin ripping her mouth
> And her eyes red-balled
> in the flash.

(Skevington's machine worked by compressing the victim's body, so that 'Nose and ears jerked blood'). I grant that a flash photograph can distort a person's features, and that its colours are likely to be violent or harsh (and here I use the metaphoric code that Reynolds also employs in 'ripping' and 'red-balled'); but after all the connections are finally an indulgence of the imagination which, as the poem itself shows, Reynolds is fully aware of. But in that case I can't see that we're being given anything other than some ingenious or not-so ingenious word games. This criticism doesn't however apply to the volume's last section, which has some excellent writing (the link between the poems of the section being Wales or Welsh matters) and feels as though it's a seam that will bear a good deal more mining.

Standing Female Nude is a front-line report on male beastliness:

> At night I fart a guinness smell against the wife who snuggles up to me after I've given her one after the Dog and Fox. It's all muscle.
> ('*You Jane*').

But the rasping asperities aren't very convincing. Would the kind of tarzan who farts a guinness smell use such a word as 'snuggles'? To be fair, there are better poems elsewhere in the volume, but I think that Duffy often spoils what promises to be good work by a sudden loss of register, so that a poem's tone will slide quite out of control. Yet, having said that, I should add that, for all its faults, *Standing Female Nude* has now-angry, now-comic energy which carries you along with it. A good read, in fact. □

Among this week's contributors:

Paul Roazen's most recent book was *Helene Deutsch: A Psychoanalyst's Life*. He is Professor of Social and Political Science at York University, Toronto.

John Lucas is Professor of English at Loughborough University. His books include *The Literature of Change*.

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'Lady Sarah Bunbury Sacrificing to the Graces' (detail)

Professional dramatics

John Spurling

Reynolds
RA

COMPARISONS ARE odious, but Gainsborough has for a long time had the best of the comparison with Reynolds. There are several reasons.

First, since he didn't experiment with unstable pigments and mediums as Reynolds did, Gainsborough's paintings have lasted better. Second, Reynolds's position in his own day as a leading establishment figure, his methodical habits of work, his employment of studio assistants for drapery and landscape backgrounds have all gone to write him off as too professional and respectable for the struggling role in which the 19th and 20th centuries have liked to cast dead artists. Gainsborough, in fact, was preferred to Reynolds at the court of George III, but his earlier practice was — from posterity's point of view — impeccably provincial, whereas Reynolds's career was metropolitan and even international almost from the outset. Third, Gainsborough's loose and feathery technique has made him seem almost a proto-Impressionist, whereas Reynolds deliberately associated himself with the past, with the Grand Tradition of classicism and Italian old masters.

But there's no need to put down Gainsborough in order to raise up Reynolds. All that's required is what we now have: a large and well selected retrospective. The Royal Academy, with the help of the National Westminster Bank, has done its first President proud. Outside in the forecourt his ebullient statue wears a sash of wreathed flowers and leaves in the best classical celebratory style; inside, the walls of nine galleries are freshly painted in strong colours and his 'accumulated good stuff' (Henry James's phrase for his own collected edition) effortlessly justifies and commands these huge spaces.

Reynolds is never quite as exciting a painter as Gainsborough can be, but he is consistently dramatic, in the sense that he always depicts his sitters in performance. The performance may consist of nothing more than a particular costume and stance — the flighty Lady Worsley's red, military-style riding outfit, her small satin-shod foot thrust forward, the turn of her head under its great black feathered hat and the long, kinked riding-switch held across the front of her skirt — or a forthright, full-face stare like Lady Caroline Fox's from close behind the picture-plane, or a set of the head, like the beautiful courtesan Kitty Fisher's, which implies that she expects, in the manner of a TV newsreader, to be constantly eyed and physically appraised.

Often, though, it's a more contrived business, entailing fancy-dress, a pose borrowed from antique sculpture or — as in the famous painting of 'Garrick between Tragedy and Comedy' — a reference to a well-known theme from classical mythology as treated by the old masters. Garrick, however, was a professional actor and could confidently carry off his laughing imitation of the Choice of Hercules, but what of 'Lady Sarah Bunbury Sacrificing to the Graces' or 'Mrs Hale as Euphrosyne' or Thomas Townshend and Colonel Acland dressed as archers in costumes of Reynolds's own invention and bending their bows like a pair of very self-conscious Actaeons in a distinctly Titianesque wood? They were perhaps amused and flattered enough to fall in with Reynolds's masquerade and to pay handsomely for the privilege (the catalogue, relying on Reynolds's pocketbooks, gives unusually full details both of appointments for sittings and of subsequent payments or the lack of them); but for the artist it was a crafty way of combining what he could make a good living at — portraits of the aristocracy — with his real ambition, the making of history paintings, the assumption by a British painter of the mantle of the great masters of the Renaissance and their French successors.

In one of three particularly good essays by different hands at the front of the catalogue Robert Rosenblum discusses Reynolds's international links and especially his contacts and friendships with contemporary French artists such as Boucher and Greuze. The very idea of a Royal Academy of Arts was, after all, thoroughly French and, according to Rosenblum, Reynolds saw it as part of 'a pan-European community of art'. But the portraits in this exhibition of Warren Hastings and a cousin of Robert Clive, who between them snatched India from the French, as well as the fact that Commodore Keppel — whose portrait first made Reynolds's reputation — was later court-martialled after an indecisive naval battle against the French, are reminders that this was the century of the Anglo-French tussle for Empire, the final, as it were, of the Western European Imperial Cup. Reynolds was surely entering British art for the Big League in something of the same spirit.

His overt history-paintings, represented here chiefly by two works, 'Count Hugolino and his children in the Dungeon, as described by Dante' and 'The Infant Hercules', an allegorical piece on a large scale, commissioned by the Empress Catherine of Russia, are disappointing. Except in his great portrait of the family of the 4th Duke of Marlborough, Reynolds shows no gift for group compositions or complex visual narrative. Although the figure of Count Hugolino himself is hauntingly grisly, the rest of that painting is quite dull, while 'The Infant Hercules' is frankly a mess, overcrowded, uncertain of its spaces, dramatically confused.

What Reynolds excels at are living people, one to one. No doubt he makes them somewhat grander, more beautiful, more intelligent, more sensitive than they usually looked, but they are not, for all that, idealised. He brings out in them a quickness, an energy, a breathing solidity which is both consummate portraiture and something more, a sense of participation in time, society and history which no other British painter has ever quite attempted, let alone achieved. Even if you jib at a gathering of the 18th-century upper classes in fancy dress, don't miss the roomful of their equally overdressed but irresistible children; above all, don't miss Reynolds's own circle of friends. Dr Johnson, Goldsmith, Garrick, Dr Burney, Mrs Abington are alive and well on the walls of the RA. □

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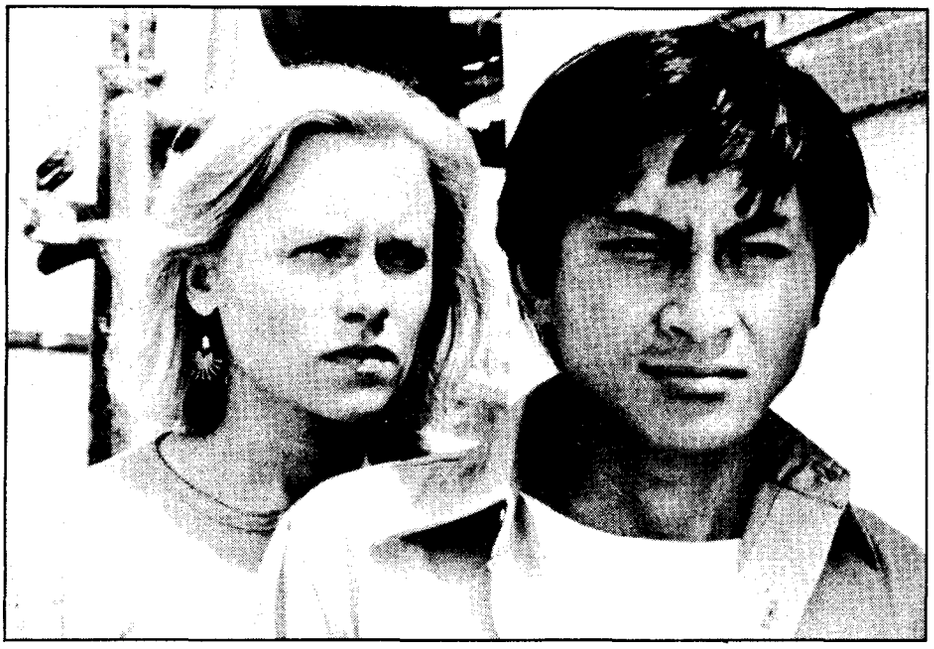
FILMS

Fishing in troubled waters

John Coleman



Glory (Amy Madigan) and Dinh (Ho Nguyen) watch the storm gather over *Alamo Bay*

Alamo Bay (15)
ICA
Sweet Dreams (15)
Curzon West End
Revolution (PG)
Warner West End; ABC, Fulham Road

IN HIS IRRESISTIBLE *Atlantic City* Louis Malle explored the mercurial, gimcrack side of the USA like a demon lover, incidentally giving Burt Lancaster a couple of his finest hours. **Alamo Bay**, if hardly matching that seedy splendour, is — by a long French chalk — the most watchable, intelligent and conscience-pricking of this week's three movies, all made on American subjects by 'foreign' directors.

Drawing on actual bad happenings on the Gulf Coast of Texas between 1979-81, Alice Arlen's tough, vernacular script spells out a bitter confrontation between local fishermen and the influx of Vietnamese refugees into an area already hit by falling prices. An opening legend establishes the predicament while a chirpy young Asian, Dinh (played by Ho Nguyen, a Houston research scientist: shades of *The Killing Fields*), trudges along with his suitcase, hitching into trouble. The amiable ex-Vietnam-vet truck driver who finally gives him a lift points largely to a giant roadside crustacean: 'Now that there, *that* is a Texas shrimp'. Landing up near a house where two tots wail in a paddling pool and their bearded, hostile father, Shang (Ed Harris), is rowing with his shrewish, jealous, extravagant wife, Dinh's smiling enquiry for his countrymen's whereabouts gets a snarled answer: 'They live over there — Slop City.' Dinh heads for a nearby trailer, to a merry welcome.

Shang's volatile savagery, to prove crucial, stems from three sources: entrapment by pregnancy into a lousy marriage, which has compounded his indebtedness to the bank and put his beloved boat in jeopardy; a lusty affair with Glory (Amy Madigan), who runs the community's fish business with an ailing dad, buying from local and Vietnamese shrimpers alike; and some sparks of racial prejudice fanned into flames by economic pressure and a travelling, rabble-rousing Klansman. Dinh is something of an ironic paragon, American-style, bouncily resolved to get ahead and hence doomed, by his cheery refusal to see antagonism, to become prime target for aggression. When a visiting official quite rightly reprimands Dinh's new-style boat people for night-fishing and other misdemeanours (Malle tries to play fair with this tricky material), Dinh unabashedly asks where he can get the 'rules', intending to have his own vessel.

Mounting tension is reflected in the stormy, sexy, talk-of-the-township affair between Shang and Glory; kissily dancing at the tavern (to a song, 'Too Close', in fact sung by Amy Madigan); screwing in a motel, then sulking over money the man wants Glory to lend him; breaking-up when Shang crudely accuses her of putting out for innocent Dinh; ending in full-blooded tragedy with petrol-bombs and bullets in the night. This relationship is tautly written and played within a richly persuasive context: both the watery fishing-boat warfare, nets being cut, a craft laden with Klansmen; and quick character-sketches — shifty bank buddy refusing Shang more credit, venal sheriff with a rotten job, supermarket employees bullying a Vietnamese woman, roughnecks spouting macho and racist spleen in tavern and café. Malle knows enough, and cares enough about his art, to spin what could have been a knee-jerk liberal tract vividly out from the central, passionate conflict of his wracked and credible lovers, Shang and Glory. Their reality anchors a sad, complex tale.

Karel Reisz's Stateside ventures have baffled me somewhat in the past: his **Sweet Dreams** defeats me utterly. Produced by Bernard Schwartz of *Coal Miner's Daughter* fame, it's a biopic pursuing the life and death of 'legendary' country singer Patsy Cline without ever catching up with either, which inevitably suffers by comparison with the Sissy Spacek vehicle. The redoubtable Jessica Lange brings her all to the role of ambitious Patsy, walking out of a dull marriage into a fraught one with feckless, drunken Charlie Dick (Ed Harris again, here beardless and, alas, bootless); the many songs heard are from original Cline recordings made between 1960 and 1963; Patsy's joshing exchanges with her ever-loving mother (excellent Ann Wedgeworth) yield some of the sparkier lines. There is a little pathos as the rising singer changes not just hairstyles but vocabulary, socially outgrowing her boozy, typesetting Dick, whose chief hold on her appears to be signalled by his surname. They have two little kids, quarrels, reconciliations; she keeps on singing, is in a car-accident, sings again and dies in a plane-crash. It is simply not very interesting and you feel anyone could have directed it.

A long time ago Donald Sutherland starred in a comedy called *Start the Revolution Without Me*, a proposal he would have done wisely to have heeded before lurching strangely about as a brutal British sergeant-major in Hugh Hudson's disaster movie. This is the one without a script, written by Robert Dillon. Between an initial sequence, set in 1776 and New York, where George III's equestrian statue is rope-hauled down by a Mob (v. Eisenstein's *October*, Alexander III's statue, etc.), and a penultimate one, in which Al Pacino's chameleon-voiced Tom Dobb — your representative fighting man in the street

Recommended viewing

A regular selection by our critic from films still doing the rounds

A Chorus Line Richard Attenborough's valiantly rewarded and rewarding shot at screening the impossible: an audience-participation stage musical. Choreographically updated by Jeffrey Hornaday, it combines exuberant dance, a good song or three, with edgy dialogue. Showbiz loving itself, but for once so what? (Vicki Frederick, Audrey Landers).

Defence of the Realm Fumes of menace rise from David Drury's corrosive if erratic political chiller, written by Martin Stellman, reflecting current home-based concerns. Hoodwinked into disgracing awkward MP, tabloid reporter redemptively opens can of worms as Special Branch hovers (Gabriel Byrne, Denholm Elliott, Greta Scacchi).

Nineteen Nineteen Hugh Brody's subtle, low-key first feature, magnificently played, mounted and edited: brief encounter in 1970 Vienna of ageing ex-patients of Freud — resident White Russian émigré Paul Scofield and naturalised New Yorker Maria Schell — for thorny, maybe therapeutic survivors' duologue deftly conjuring with Time and History.

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— re-encounters his fiery middle-class activist love Daisy (Nastassja Kinski), the hugging pair to be swallowed up by rejoicing crowds of amateur actors (compare and contrast end of *Les Enfants du Paradis)*, there lie some 120 minutes of scrambled footage, epic and intimate tedium, missed chances. **Revolution** was shot at various sites in England: it should have been shot at birth. □

ARCHITECTURE

Bang, bang

Jules Lubbock

As the City floods into Canary Wharf, will the public be drowned in skyscrapers?

COME BACK Peter Palumbo, all is forgiven. Well, not quite *all* maybe, but I did feel a small pang of nostalgia while I watched New York property developer Mr G. Ware Travelstead and his gang of architects present their Master Plan for ten million sq.ft. of offices and three 900-foot skyscrapers on Canary Wharf to an audience of ecstatic architects at the RIBA last Monday.

For, in contrast to dapper little Peter with his olde-worlde manners and his boyish enthusiasm for that dinky Mies van der Rohe tower (60,000 of which would fit into Canary Wharf), the bull-necked and ox-headed Ware is the embodiment of brute nature which, on meeting an obstacle, floods into a new channel. In this instance, Nature is the 'Big Bang' due to be detonated later this year with the liberalisation of financial dealings in the City. It 'needs' dealing floors of 50,000 sq.ft. in a 'critical mass' of 10m.sq.ft. 'Like it or not,' Travelstead proclaimed, 'it is a fact of life.'

The Obstacle is the British process of planning and public inquiry which killed off Palumbo's tower. 'I have been accused of not understanding the planning process,' said Travelstead. Then he paused for effect before delivering the punchline, which drew wild applause from the audience of architects. 'I plead guilty. I *don't* understand a process taking 22 years before saying whether a man can build or not.' The prospect of delay 'drove' him out of the Square Mile. So Canary Wharf is the consequence of Palumbo's defeat and the revenge on City and conservationists alike by Mrs Thatcher and the members of the property developers club whose meetings she hosts in Downing Street.

Canary Wharf is also the LDDC's much needed breakthrough. Chief Executive Reg Ward explained that their policy had been to create a market first by improving communications and then by signalling to developers that there were no obstacles to the highest bidders, even if, as in this case, it meant gazumping earlier proposals. This also throws light on why, last August, while Travelstead was negotiating, the Minister for the Environment, after an unprecedented delay of 20 months, finally gave planning permission, against his inspector's advice, for the Seifert housing scheme at nearby Limehouse Basin, scuppering the Limehouse Development Group's alternative community-based proposal (*NS* 11 January 1985). Planning inquiries and 'small is beautiful' were a thing of the past in Docklands. Locals, in future, would be informed and 'consulted'.

Mr Ward was also brutally frank about the skyscrapers. He hoped Canary Wharf would be a 'catalyst' for many more such schemes — however many skyscrapers that meant. Travelstead's own architects' computer-graphic simulation of the view from Greenwich Hill, 'utilising the most formidable capability of this kind in the world', showed me that even a mere three skyscrapers would dominate the skyline, dwarf the cupolas of Wren's Hospital and wreck its symmetry. But the attitude to objectors by the LDDC and the government, whose Secretary of State, Kenneth Baker, refused an inquiry, is 'Sod off — and clear out of the path of Progress.'

All the public is offered is a series of extraordinary visualisations of the scheme — not architectural perspectives, which are deceptive enough, but wishy-washy watercolours: a Venetian view across the river in the style of Turner and an impressionist sketch of dappled light filtering through the trees lining a street of 18th-century-style red-brick terraces. We saw none of the ten-storey, 220-foot-square buildings to house the new dealing floors.

Once the planning inquiry was refused in November, many felt that the fight was lost. This is wrong. The GLC has been given leave to bring an action against the LDDC for contravening London rules on high buildings, and the GLC will ensure that its action is sustained after abolition.

At stake is what is fundamental to environmental politics. It is not merely, as conservationists would have it, that our most pleasing amenities must be preserved; or, as community activists would have it, that communities should control their local affairs. Common to both views is the moral truth that the human environment is shaped not by the spurious forces of nature suggested by Travelstead's nuclear metaphors — 'Big Bang', 'critical mass', 'driven' — but by

Bach: Mass in B minor
GARDINER *Archiv* 415 514-2 (two CDs)
Bach's grandest liturgical work has traditionally encouraged grand performances; curiously, the revolution in baroque performing practice and the use of period seems to have taken longer to percolate to the B minor Mass than it has to many smaller-scale pieces. John Eliot Gardiner uses the scale of forces and, as far as possible, the instrumental and vocal style that pertained in Bach's time: the chorus, the Monteverdi Choir, is small, some 30-odd singers, and the soloists drawn from it as required; the orchestra of the English Baroque Soloists is chamber-sized. To his credit, Gardiner manages to combine the flexibility and clarity of small forces with the dimensions of a major choral work; there is no want of majesty or power in the biggest set pieces, while the more equal partnership between voice and instrument uncovers new expressive possibilities. After hearing this, no one should be yearning for the old-school B minor Mass again.

Maxwell Davies: Into the Labyrinth, Sinfonietta Accademica
DAVIES *Unicorn-Kanchana* DKP 9038
Sooner or later someone will come out and describe Maxwell Davies's current music as 'neo-romantic', but until they do we are left with reconciling the limpidity and assonance of recent scores with the more extreme language of their predecessors. The two works recorded here belong in a trilogy of pieces for chamber orchestra from 1983; the central panel, *Into the Labyrinth*, sets a text by George Mackay Brown, for tenor (the excellent Neil Mackie here); it is effectively a cantata. The Sinfonietta began as a celebration for the 400th anniversary of Edinburgh University but in the context of the entire sequence constitutes yet another Orkney portrait, as full of poetic and atmospheric images as either of its partners. Davies's technical powers are now remarkable in their precision and imaginative breadth; his development has been unorthodox but it has produced a very singular personality who is now harder to classify than ever.

Mozart: Piano Sonatas
UCHIDA *Philips* 412 617—2
Mitsuko Uchida's performances of the Mozart piano concertos have been one of the biggest hits of the current South Bank season. While recordings of those are still a little way off, she is well into a cycle of the Mozart piano sonatas. The current release — Sonatas in C major, D major and the C minor prefaced by its companion Fantasia — is the fourth so far. Her inestimable virtues as a classical interpreter are displayed as eloquently as ever: the lack of irrelevant detail or egocentric gesturing, the scrupulous attention to texts, the serene transparency of every texture. Such objective virtues do not imply that her playing is at all impersonal; the way in which, for instance, the dramatic shape of the C minor Fantasia is plotted, as well as the expressiveness of her phrasing in every section, demonstrates that. It is hard to think of another pianist who plays Mozart as superbly as Uchida does here.

Andrew Clements

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human decisions. Progress is as social and as human as the very obstacles, such as our planning laws, which delay it in the interests of rational public debate. Travelstead's 'Sod you' to the view of Greenwich Hospital is a 'Sod you' to all that any community holds dear — to beautiful architecture, to local responsibility and to local employment. That is why Canary Wharf matters. □

THEATRE

Quiche of death

Benedict Nightingale

The Light Rough
BRIAN THOMPSON *Hampstead*
Traitors
MELANIE PHILLIPS *Drill Hall*

THE LIGHT ROUGH is the sort of play that seems of greater interest to the social anthropologist than the student of drama. What, it implicitly asks, is the precise resonance of quiche, jacuzzis, sofas from Heals, Queens Park Rangers, the *Guardian*, working for the Arts Council, having a caravan at Lyme, living in Clapham, not living in Clapham and a hundred other objects and activities? Scarcely a sentence passes without a reference that in some way places the characters and their acquaintances in one or another of our island's intricate hierarchies. You could, I suppose, say that this is a play about insularity and the class system; but it comes across as insular and class-obsessed itself, a symptom of a classic English disease.

One might go further and call it a menopausal piece about the male menopause, yet another example of a genre that has surfaced on our stages rather often in recent years. 'I'm 50,' proclaims the protagonist, an antiquarian bookseller called Paul, 'that's the most important thing to know about me.' Arrival at that chronological equator has, it seems, transformed him into a forlorn archetype of inadequacy, insufficiency, middle-class guilt and general liberal impotence. To his wife's exasperated accusations that he has no convictions, no beliefs and spends his days 'diddling in the margins', he has the expected answers. In a complex world, 'how can you underestimate total conviction'? Isn't it right to flounder when people are 'killing each other for their beliefs'? It's an outlook that Brian Thompson seems at times mildly to criticise, but clearly finds fundamentally congenial.

And why not? Just because a dramatic path is well trod, it doesn't follow that a playwright is prohibited from donning his trainers and jogging thereon. Add a fresh eye and mind to fresh feet and lungs, and the result might even be a fresh view of familiar scenery. That hasn't happened here, though. What we have instead is a piece remarkable largely for its wordiness, illogic of plot and susceptibility to caricature. Paul's marriage to Annie is enervatingly analysed before its reality has been adequately established or our interest in it won. Nor is there any good reason to find what he does to save it, challenge her lover to a round of golf, anything except deeply implausible. Anyone can see that it's hardly likely to achieve its professed object, which is to impress Annie, a sophisticated psychotherapist, with his basic boldness of temperament. Anyone must suspect that it's just Thompson's way of extending his story, prolonging his play and getting his characters where he whimsically wants them, on or near a golf course.

Those people vary in substance and credibility, too. Tony Selby brings a disarming pep to the condescendingly conceived character of Paul's golf-partner, a self-made type with a wife called Rene and pronounced 'Reen'; Oliver Ford does even better with Paul's best friend, a canny old bird posing as a tweedy ditherer and shambling anachronism; but Heather Canning is scarcely more than earnest as Paul's wife and Alfred Lynch no more than ravaged-looking and loud as Paul himself. The real problem, though, is Paul's rival and combatant, a leather-jacketed lecturer from Kent University given to interjecting denunciation of 'state violence' into dinner parties in SW4; a travesty leftie who, just in case we're tempted to take him even a little seriously, has been thoughtfully provided by Thompson with a public-school background and stands slyly accused of being in reaction against it. What can William Hoyland do with the part except smirk, look supercilious and act superior? The answer is not much; and, since character is a prime source of the evening's dramatic and moral tension, that's quite a pity.

Traitors is, I suppose, a more amateurish effort, but also a more appealing one, since the object of its agonisings and anguishings is the conscience, not the navel. Harriet Goldsmith, like her author an upmarket journalist, has proof that the Thatcher government ignored clear warnings that the Falklands were to be invaded. Should she publish, right in the middle of the war, and risk all sorts of subtle and deadly revenges? Again, she's Jewish, deeply embarrassed by Israel's invasion of Lebanon and prepared to endure accusations of disloyalty by criticising it in public. What should she do when her own magazine goes a step further and prints an attack that resonates with English anti-Semitism? *Traitors* addresses major issues of integrity and identity, with genuine intellectual passion; but also with (inevitable, perhaps, since it's a first play) lapses of theatrical skill.

Melanie Phillips is best when her characters are on their feet in meeting halls or sitting in TV studios, opining and orating. At less formal moments, the characters can become somewhat predictable, the dialogue rather stagey. 'Bit of a risky business,' a Ministry snooper warns our crusading scribe. 'So it would seem,' she snaps sardonically back. 'Sense of humour, eh?' comes the riposte, 'I like that.' Julia Pascal, who directs, should have dealt at source with Ms Phillips's more gallumphing banter; but then little about her production suggests she's much interested in subtlety or complexity, and the acting of her cast varies from the merely competent to the, well, bad. □

Naseem Khan
Tightrope

IF YOU'VE EVER had a hankering for life in the Big Top, a pair of spangled tights or a clown's bendy stick, your time is coming. That's the good news. The bad news is the slow and steady decline of old-style, traditional circus: the glitter, the razzmatazz, the excitement that ran through a neighbourhood with the setting up of the circus tent — where is it all now? Not on the streets and commons of Britain. The number of circuses actually on the road has shrunk. Cost, taxes, local authority regulations have clobbered them; so have audiences who, corrupted by television circus where every moment is a high spot, have come to expect unreal glamour.

Given this situation, what can circuses do? Some have desperately tried to hit back. There have been attempts to raise the profile of circus with international championships. There have been initiatives like Gerry Cottle's circus school, that would, in theory, bring new blood into a dying world. There has been the much vaunted animal-less circus, which proved disastrous in audience terms — ideologically pure but practically a non-starter.

No surprise, then, that the last circus I saw, a few months back, had a dejected feel: a half-empty, freezing tent; the smell of synthetic hot dogs; children clamouring for overpriced souvenirs.Into this general malaise came the performers - neat, well-turned-out acrobats; a sardonic-looking elephant; a small, bald-headed strong man wider than he was long; plump ladies in high-cut leotards posing admiringly as men did brave things. The two-piece band resolutely pumped out oompah tunes, but there's no doubt that the heart had gone out of it.

Nevertheless, signs are that this could be a case of 'The king is dead, long live the king'. Bertram Mills, Billy Smart *et al* and the three-ring circus might have vanished, but there's a new approach to an old form in the air — one that could, its protagonists hope, spell out a new lease of life. It may not be circus as we've known it — that has probably gone for ever — but it may encapsulate elements that were at the heart of the old phenomenon.

Pick up a copy, for instance, of Reg Bolton's *Circus in a Suitcase* — a wonderfully clear guide to do-it-yourself circus, published, aptly, by Butterfingers, 53 Upper Cheltenham Place, Bristol BS6 5HS, for £5 plus p&p — and you'll have set foot on one of the roads leading to new circus. If you want to learn how to juggle or how to do backwards flips or even how to elicit money from a street-corner audience, then this is the book for you. But it's more than that. The basic skills it teaches form the core of a burgeoning but little known children's circus movement (twelve of them,

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for instance, gathered in Edinburgh last summer but one). *Circus in a Suitcase* gives advice on starting a local circus: organisation, administration, structure ('Stage Three — The First Public Meeting'). Bolton, currently working in Australia where new circus (such as Circus Oz) is more advanced, decribes the start of two such circuses here with great warmth and vision. This, as far as he's concerned, is where it all started — basic, wonderful skills; direct close contact with your audience; a rough, original magic unvarnished by technology.

Bolton is not alone in his view (as the children's circuses bear out). It will be the basis, for instance, of a new venture starting in the spring. Watch out for Richard Ward's first national circus-skills school in Bristol. 'Circus is coming back to where it started,' says Bolton in his book. 'To the streets.'

Circus Senso, another new venture, shares that philosophy but not its conclusions. Senso welcomes, embraces, glories in technology ('Circus for the microchip generation' it calls itself) — lights, synthesisers, rock, the lot. It's circus as if run by *The Face* — punky, cool performers in bizarre satin costumes, like a take-off of Edwardian swimsuits in hot, luscious colours; a score by Bruce Cole that ranges from reggae to classical and is designed to fit the mood of each act in a way that the overall floridity of old-style circus music never did. This circus is an extremely consciously produced event (its director, Terry O'Connell, comes from the world of Australian circus), not the traditional accretion of acts.

At the heart of it, there's one old trouper, the unmatchable Brian Andro, a wry-faced, ash-blond man with startling, pencil-black, thick eyebrows scrawled across a white face, whose long family experience of circus adds the salt and flavour to this new mix of circus. The other ten performers are young and from non-circus backgrounds — dance, street performance and busking, athletics, performance art. They all do everything: there's no roll of drums to tell you the top dogs are about to perform. Nor is there a sexual division, with strong blokes and graceful women. In one aerial act, a burly man hangs suspended by a slight woman. Eat your heart out, Bertram Mills.

The acts themselves are imaginative and fetching, but it's not the skills themselves that are striking. It's their context. Two slender, impassive women turn and gyrate in strict co-ordination high up on swings: the lighting is blue-ish and mysterious, the music limpid and classical. Two young men in vast, black, velvet crinolines struggle to control invisible unicycles. The performers leap and dive through hoops and series of hoops with the neat impassivity of cats.It is simple stuff, but done with impeccable, elusive style. Although the tone for much of it has a haunting minor key, some acts are wonderfully funny: Brian Andro's splendidly incompetent tightrope walk and an acrobatic teddybear who knocked spots off his human minder. What it does need is a greater variation of tone — a touch of old circus's boastfulness, vulgarity and sense of its own importance would not come amiss. But even without it, Circus Senso makes a night to remember. □

Clifford Harper

A parfit gentil knight

Ian Williams

AFTER THE firemen's strike, a friend was covering his strike losses by standing in as landlord of our local. We stood in the bar, for sweet Solidarity's sake, maintaining its takings. Bobby always held a 'Late Taste' after closing time. You could always tell which Liverpool pub did because of police cars parked outside and policemen parked inside. Nobody worried too much, since it kept them off the streets and out of trouble!

Anyway, although it was well past closing time, for once we were without constabulary custom. This left us as a self-policing community which was, perhaps, partly the cause of the chivalric gestes to follow.

We were commiserating with Roy, another fireman. He'd remained on strike and solo-picket a week after everyone else, refusing to work with strikebreakers. But now he'd reluctantly gone back to work, he was drowning his nagging conscience in a tsunami of bitter.

Bobby declared the second house officially open and was closing the doors when someone launched himself through them. It was an Adenese Arab, a shopkeeper, who was called 'Ali' because that's what every Arab shopkeeper in Liverpool has been called since Sinbad first docked here.

Ali was passionately, but unrequitedly, in love with Peg behind the bar. More violent emotions now moved him. He marched over, threatening her nastily for her temerity in accepting free drinks without returning free love.

Roy nudged me to go over with him. He wasn't a bit philosophical, never once mentioning the Labour Theory of Value nor questioning the semantics of 'free'. 'Leave her alone, and bugger off,' he said. 'Or we'll flatten your nose for you', with all the conviction that only a week's solo picketing can give you.

Since the 'we' included me I loomed over in solidarity to say 'Move!'

'Hah! English *gentlemen*,' Ali spat. 'Two to one! Hah! No wonder you lost your Empire!'

This was the wrong thing to say where Bobby could hear. He'd demonstrated sterling virtues during the strike, but he was a bit short on the old Proletarian Internationalism. A former sergeant, he had personally, and unhappily, supervised the dismemberment of the British Empire. He'd hauled the flag down almost everywhere on the P&O route back from India — except in Aden, where he'd run up the gang plank with bullets whizzing behind and the flag left behind also. So. Aden, Arabs and Empire each separately provoked an almost olfactory Pavlovian response in him, but in this unhappy conjunction . . .

He came down like an imperialist on the fold, brandishing a broomstick like a bayonet,

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rebellious Arab crowds for the dealing with, offering to insert it painfully up each nostril in turn. We winced at the thought and so, presumably, did Ali, since he left, promising revenge on Peg and all of us, lamenting the three to one odds and the demise of British cricket and sportsmanship, but celebrating the end of the Empire.

The strain of chivalry proved too much for Roy, who subsided gracefully into the corner. His conversation afterwards was restricted to "Nother pint!' and he even stopped complaining about the blackleg firemen.

Half-an-hour and some pints later, Peg decided it was safe to go home and, refusing offers of an escort, walked off.

Minutes later she was shouting through the letter box, 'Hey Roy! Is your yellow van on the derry?'

For linguists, in Scouse, 'derry', derived from 'derelict', originally meant a bomb-site, but the town planners appreciated the Luftwaffe's competition so much that they covered the city with imitations. To humour them, we call *their* products 'derries' as well.

Peg's shout aroused Roy enough for him to mumble around the edge of his pint, that yes, his yellow Golly Lorry was on the derry. (Golly Lorry — another story, another time.)

'Well,' said Peg, developing a sense of dramatic timing, 'that nutty Arab's breaking into it!'

She had a self-satisfied grin through the letter box, like a first-class delivery by the Cheshire cat. All the pub was a stage and this excitement, with her as Prima Donna, was next best to launching a thousand ships and cheaper than a thousand bottles of champagne as well.

I was suddenly seized by a berserker chivalry of the kind that can usually be lived with — but only if suppressed totally and instantly: sort of over the limit in charge of a white steed. Roy had won the battle with his conscience and had passed out.

The finger of fate pointed firmly at me. Flinging open the door I charged in the direction Peg's arm so dramatically pointed. Racing Light Brigade-style across the busy road, buses to the left of me, taxis to the right of me, over to where Ali was now starting the van. Surviving the sprint across the road and on the derry itself, adrenalin topped up by playing matador to an 86 bus, I launched myself at the door of the yellow van and grabbed Ali through the open window. The van was picking up speed, and my intervention had us heading straight for a lamp-post and bus shelter. He braked just short, and looked at me with incredulous resentment, 'You're Mad!' he shouted, 'Mad!', as I began hauling him through the window by his tie.

At the fringe of my vision, Bobby was on the other side of the road waving his arm. He was shouting, so I strained my hearing through the noise of the traffic while holding Ali firmly by the throat. 'Roy's Golly Lorry is on the *other* derry! . . . Wrong yellow van!' I heard.

With the congenital dignity of a generation of empire demolishers, I hauled down the flag. I released Ali with the stern injunction 'Don't do it again!' and marched back to the pub, leaving yet another patch of pink erased from the atlas. □

TELEVISION

Hugo Williams
Snow storm

IT IS INTERESTING to note after which programmes the Health Council chooses to place its anti-heroin advertisements. Pop music is clearly an early sign of drug abuse, so, after **The Tube** (C4), on comes this heavily made-up actor claiming, without a shred of conviction, that he can 'handle it'; 'it' being heroin. In the final stages of his performance he looks much like the rest of us do at this time of year, so most junkies will probably agree with his assertion.

Another apparent attraction for nodders who have decided that life is a meaningless struggle for illusory rewards is **American Football** (C4). After you have seen the game and the ad in conjunction a few times, you start to understand the deadening action on the astro-turf as an accurate dramatisation of the street hassles most junkies have to go through to make their wretched scores: one step forward, two steps back, but with no ticker-tape parade for the victor. The game's nihilism and gormlessness is a clear vindication of the junkie's hopeless lifestyle — and the junkie never misses a match. This, anyway, appears to be the received wisdom on the matter.

The funniest thing on **Spitting Image** (ITV) has been oyster-faced junkie The Marquess of Blandford mimicking the said heroin advertisement, except that, being profoundly rich and with access to one of the progressive recovery establishments shown on **From the Horse's Mouth** (C4), the real Marquess is more likely than some to be able finally to 'handle it'. Instead of spending 18 months in genteel dry-out hotels, pimples like the Marquess can now be restored to full working uselessness in about six weeks.

'We're cost effective here,' claimed the director of one such hydro, which charges our heroes about £70 a day for an aggressive, intensive form of treatment based on a much-mentioned 'Minnesota Model'. This 'cost-effectiveness' was able to subsidise a few 'assisted beds', but there was a waiting list for these which, in theory at least, could be as long as 100,000 (the government admitted number of UK heroin addicts) and/or 1m. if we're talking about alkies. I was interested to learn that these two categories are now considered to be the same — i.e. junkies.

Detox is nothing. The problem is facing facts, so our rich kids have their noses rubbed in themselves at daily talk-ins supervised by druggies who have achieved remission (there is no cure for addiction). The course is an unpleasant eye-opener for addicts long-blinded by the denial that accompanies their illness. 'I thought I was naturally dishonest,' said one, suffering a new form of pain for his pains. We saw the accusatory blackboards, group confrontation sessions and four-course meals that rebuild the over-privileged into the under-achievers they might otherwise have been, sometimes temporarily, but with a mooted 75 per cent success rate.

For entertainment, I preferred the previous week's episode, with addict-stars like Barry Humphries doing a cross between a chat show, an ego-trip and a confession. Everyone went for likeability here, but only Humphries triumphed in the format as he remembered driving through Piccadilly in a taxi, clutching a whisky bottle in a Harrods' bag and seeing the junkies outside Boots and imagining he was somehow different. 'All the best people were drunks,' he recalled, 'Dylan Thomas, John Barrymore, Tony Hancock, why not me? By 25 I was having an early morning drink, something most alcoholics don't get round to till much later in their lives. Then I discovered pubs . . .'

Later in the show an ex-hippy businessman (what a common breed that is today) described how he'd allow himself to reach 'little rock bottoms' from which he secretly knew his grandfather would lift him up with loans. 'Then afterwards I'd steal from his safe . . .' The trouble with such people, one imagined, was getting them to be nice to themselves again afterwards. A pitifully pallid specimen described the physical dangers of junkdom: 'You get to the stage where you don't know what the fix is going to do to you. You feel so proud if you survive that you feel like Superman.'

Let's hope the series opens the eye of the authorities to the unfashionable fact that addiction is a physical disease: addicted to one, addicted to all. 'Some people get right up to the cemetery gates before they decide to get off the tram', said Barry Humphries, 'but nowadays they don't have to, thanks to the Minnesota Model.'

Drugs = paranoia = a vision of the coming reality if Duncan Campbell's chilling performance on **Opinions: Misrule Britannia** (C4) was to be believed. Campbell looked us in the eye for half an hour and told us about the little-known local intelligence officers (see *NS* 24 January) recruited by police forces since 1966, each of whom has at least one informant in every street. The observations collected by this spy network are stored in the Central Index Bank and can be transferred 'at whim' to police computers anywhere in the country. Horrible though this may sound, it is not what Campbell fears most. 'It is the *chilling effect* we fear,' he said; an effect which is unlawful, stemming from oppressive official surveillance. (Of 12m. checks each year, 10m. are on innocent people, who could easily become guilty with a re-interpretation of the facts.) The solutions are all political, but the trends of government action are away from human rights and accountability.

One had a vision of a cold-blooded computer-state very different from the homely, fallible world depicted in **The Bill** (ITV), currently the best produced series on television. One can imagine such programmes moving further and further from reality in years to come. As the secret state moves closer to our subconscious, so the televisual version of the police will become more incompetently human; not a serious crime in sight, only pots of geraniums, respectful insubordination and smalltime hookers and lifters. □

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Weekend competition

No 2909 Set by E. O. Parrott

Time for a really incestuous comp. How do you see comp. regulars — Bellenger, Petty, fflap, etc? Dickensian descriptions, please, by 13 February. No more than 120 words.

No 2906 Set by Margaret Rogers

Laments for the old-style Sunday or odes to the new.

Report By Len the Unlucky

'Jesus wants me for a sunbeam' and coming *straight* home from Sunday school and, anyway, the swings all padlocked and tinned peaches for tea again — how you brought it all back. Your verses reeked of the melancholy of Sundays past and of even sadder middle-aged nostalgia for those endlessly dutiful days. An enervating ennui has settled on me. I think Murray, Petty, Evans, Bunker, Clark, Norman and O'Keats (O'Keats?) were quite good and Sharpless, Meredith, Bellenger and both Princes just about deserve £12 each.

Where are the Sundays of yesteryear,
With their black-clad, rain-puddled atmosphere
Of mildew and gravy and lunch-time beer?
Oh, utterly vanished away!

No hush, no galoshes, no Sunday best,
No glow of virtue with sins confessed,
No respect for the parents' post-prandial rest,
No embargo on noise-making play.
Those were the Sundays of powerful gloom,
When Our Father meant Dad in the dining room
And no one had heard of rude words like 'womb',
And the Lord had not had his day.

ALISON PRINCE

Sundays
(after Philip Larkin)

What are Sundays for?
Sundays are where we live.
Getting up late,
Cleaning the car,
Leafing through the Supplements,
Watching the *South Bank Show*.
They are to be happy in.
Where can we live but Sundays?

Ah, solving that question
Brings the business men
In their dark suits
Running over the fields.

STANLEY J. SHARPLESS

It's no go the roast beef, it's no go the Yorkshire pud,
All we want is a quiche lorraine and yoghurt in a tub.
It's no go *Family Favourites*, it's no go the old Pop. Ford,
All we want is software to save us from being bored.

It's no go Sylvia Peters, it's no go the potter's wheel,
All we want is Melvyn Bragg and a film direkt from Kiel.
It's no go *What's My Line*, it's no go John Arlott,
All we want is American soap with another 'sexy' starlet.
Hancock's had his last half hour and Gilbert Harding has been put to bed.
Now we're all Yankee Doodle Dandies, Rams and Jets with Nicky Horne instead.

TONY MEREDITH

Sunday? It's wholly
For sleeping off Saturday,
Hair of the dog,
Read-*The-People*-and-natter day.

Tradition sanctified
Spectator-sports day,
Winter-time-TV,
Summer-time-shorts day.

Roast beef and two veg.,
A run in the Merc.
Change it? Get stuffed, mate!
Dear God! D'you mean . . . *work*?

D. A. PRINCE

So long to those dinners where no-one got thinner
On beef smothered slowly in gravy,
Before mocking vicars with scandalous snickers
And tutting at Cuts In The Navy.

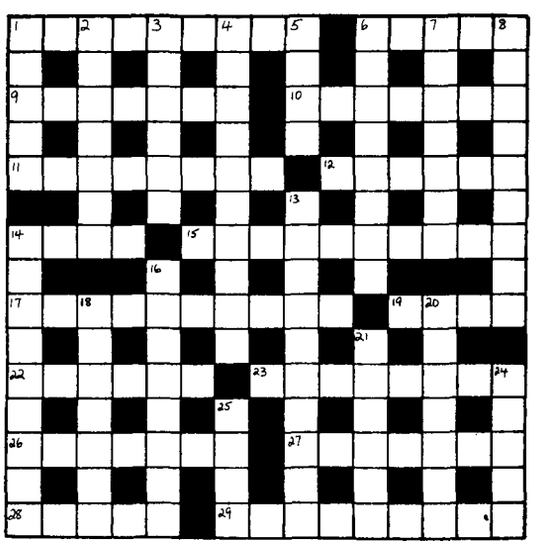
Then to sit on the sofas like regular loafers
To watch The Big Match, feeling heavy,
To get a quick kip in before swiftly nippin'
Down The Crown for a nice little bevy!

But now — grab a trolley, and unload your lolly,
And less of the jam roly-poly,
And a sandwich at nine with some supermart wine —
Didn't someone know Sunday was holy?

WILL BELLENGER

Weekend Crossword 1507

PRIZES: £5 Book Tokens for the first three correct solutions opened. Entries to Crossword 1507, New Statesman, 14-16 Farringdon Lane, London EC1R 3AU by first post 11 February.



Name_____

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_____

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ACROSS

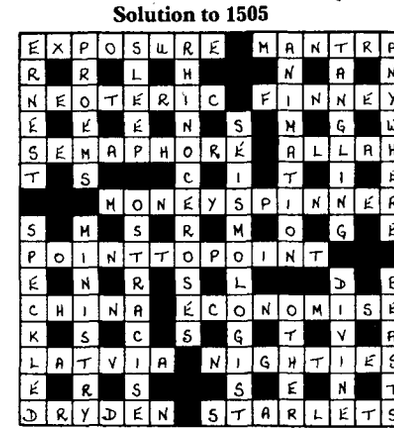
1 Devices needed if refreshments are to follow cultural activity (9)
6 This supplies pull to gain an honour (5)
9 Peak featured in improvised vocal number (7)
10 Spoke at length since in France he is among the old-fashioned (7)
11 Went slowly in turning tree into strange idol (8)
12 An article on censorship in Greek (6)
14 Annoys by starting games inside a vehicle (4)
15 Assorted brand names for gaucherie (3,7)
17 Having fun in an away defeat? (10)
19 Lacking feminine lead, realities become bits of play (4)
22 Lives as result of effort in the main backing (6)
23 Showed there is food in grass (8)
26 Bit of Greek in a moronic translation (7)
27 Pretend to sound as if one is expressing contempt for beauty treatment (7)
28 A star is back in the cavity (5)
29 Situations in which most of evil is in drinks (9)

DOWN

1 Block in which there is a Roman villa (5)
2 A short story with a monarch holding forth (7)
3 Parts of film in which a wretched fellow holds mother up (6)
4 Stand shoulder to shoulder when people with odd ideas are about to suffer defeat (5,5)
5 Team composed of stars but without real finish (4)
6 Shewing learner twisting and cheating (8)
7 Distinguished and incompetent (7)
8 Those who believe in pleasure being dispensed in thin doses (9)
13 I assume Ann works as a secretary (10)
14 Animals which bring bitterness to an enthusiast (9)
16 Weapons I bring up if the senior officers are missing (8)
18 Without the bulb the view would be good (7)
20 Plays badly in company for a song (7)
21 Others take the old man in for a meal (6)
24 Entrances for an actress who has got nothing in her (5)
25 A cold spell gives one a break (4)

SETSQUARE

Solution to 1505



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MEETINGS

THEOSOPHY: S.a.e. for free pamphlets, book list, programme of activities. Public Talk Sunday 2 Feb. 8 p.m. 'Reincarnation & Transmigration'. ULT, 62 Queen's Gardens, London W2 3AL. N5.35

AGENDA

FOR DETAILS CALL DAVID JONES 01-251 5487

FRI 31 JAN

RESISTANCE TO CHANGE — PERI-NATAL INFLUENCES: fresh thinking, in presentation by DAVID WASDELL. Open to all involved/interested in organisational change. 4-6pm, £2, 27 Torrington Square (Byng Place), WC1 (Euston tube.)
The Leading Edge organisational change network. Info: John Baker-Rabe 01-689 1198.

MON 3 FEB

"BENEATH THE WHITE COAT:" seminars on science and politics organised by the **British Society for Social Responsibility in Science.** This week: *Steven Rose*, Open University 'BIOLOGY AND THE NEW RIGHT.' 6.30pm Adam's Arms, Conway Street, London W1 (tube: Warren Street).

SOCIALIST SOCIETY DEBATE: Robin Cook MP & Anthony Barnett "The next Labour Government: a challenge to the Left?" The Green Man, Berwick Street, London W1. 8pm. 01-734 8501.

WED 5 FEB

FAITH IN THE CITY. A major lecture series at St James's Church Piccadilly at 1.05pm. This week: CANON ERIC JAMES, Director of Christian Action, "Change for the Church". Details: 01-734 4511.

IRISH PRISONERS APPEAL. Stop the Strip Searches of Martina Anderson & Ella O'Dwyer on remand in Brixton prison. 7.30pm County Hall, SE1. Speakers: Ken Livingstone, Isobel Anderson, Mike Fisher (solicitor) & Linda Bellos.

PUBLIC MEETING: 'Racist Laws Then & Now.' 7.30pm Kilburn Library, Salusbury Road, NW6. Speakers: Paul Boateng, Michelle Carlisle. Organised by Jewish Cultural & Anti-Racist Project.

SAT 8 JAN

A DAY FOR NICARAGUA. Theatre, poetry, slide show, video, panel discussion, food, stalls, exhibition. Participants include *Prunella Scales, Timothy West, Jeremy Corbyn MP & Alf Dubbs MP.* Evening concert with *Ewan MacColl & Peggy Seegar.* Atheldene Centre, 305 Garrat Lane, SW18. Afternoon 2-6pm £2. Concert 7.30pm £3. Both £4. Concessions. Organised by Tooting Labour Party. Details 01-767 5373.

STUDENT CONFERENCE on Nicaragua. Day long meeting in Oxford founding National Student Organisation in support of Nicaragua wih NUS & NSC assistance. If interested contact Peter Benjamin, St Catherine's College, Oxford. 0865 717840.

FORTHCOMING

NUCLEAR FREE ZONES — Nuclear Free Independent Pacific Women's Tour of U.K. 1-15 March, 1986. CONTACT: NFZ UNIT, MANCHESTER TOWN HALL 061 234 3244.

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BLOOMSBURY THEATRE 01-387 9629 30-31 Jan 7.30pm **BIEDERMANN UND DIE BRANDSTISTER** by Max Frisch (in German). 12 Feb 7.30pm at the **Logan Hall LONDON SINFONIETTA.**

Poetry

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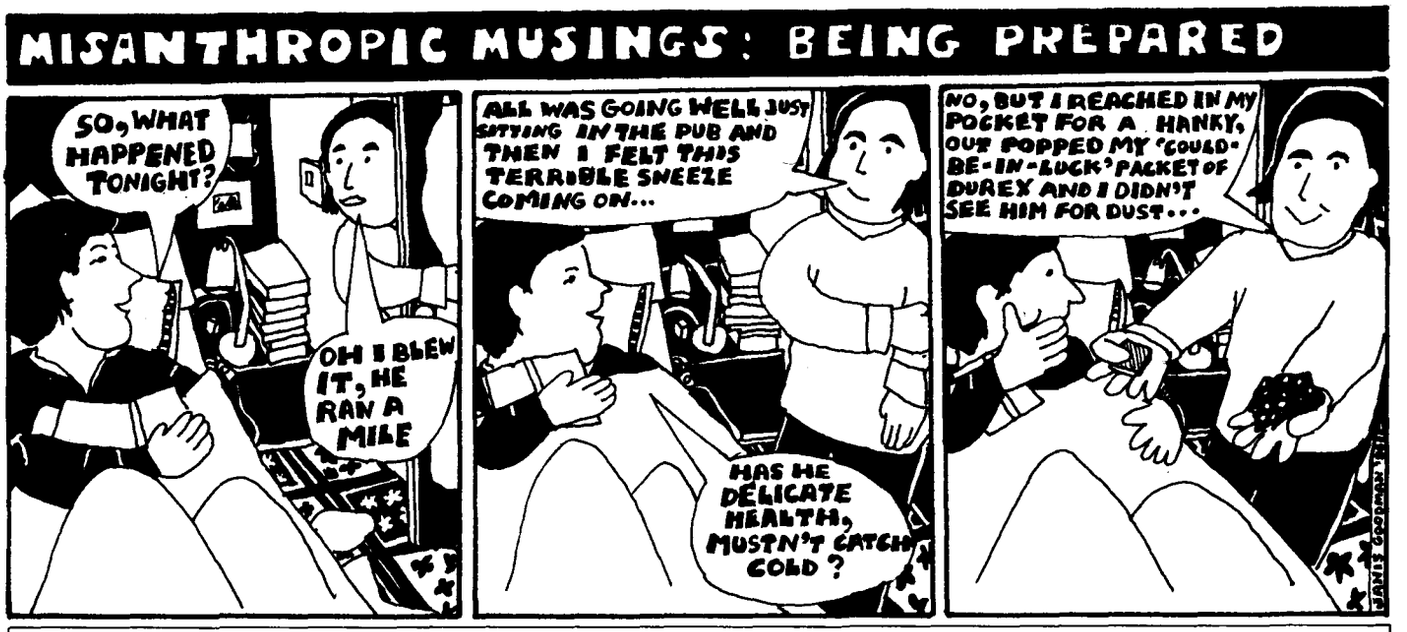

MISANTHROPIC MUSINGS: BEING PREPARED
SO, WHAT HAPPENED TONIGHT?
OH I BLEW IT, HE RAN A MILE
ALL WAS GOING WELL JUST SITTING IN THE PUB AND THEN I FELT THIS TERRIBLE SNEEZE COMING ON...
HAS HE DELICATE HEALTH, MUSTN'T CATCH COLD ?
NO, BUT I REACHED IN MY POCKET FOR A HANKY, OUT POPPED MY 'COULD-BE-IN-LUCK' PACKET OF DUREX AND I DIDN'T SEE HIM FOR DUST...

CHESS

'THE BLEAKEST game in the world' — I quote in disgust and despair from the *Sunday Times* colour supplement of 19 January. Beneath the glossy photo-portraits of Short and Tal there was something that passed for a 'report' on the Montpellier candidates. The usual stuff, a re-heated stew of stale attitudes, telling us how those oddball chess masters are sometimes almost human. Why must the British media (with the exception of Jeremy James and Bill Hartston on BBC-2) persist in treating chess in such a stupid and uncomprehending way?

The *Sunday Times* is fortunate to have Bernard Cafferty, a strong player, an expert on the history and literature of the game and a Russian linguist, as their regular columnist. One might have thought he was the obvious choice to prepare a feature article on the tournament. But this would have involved breaking an established editorial principle: chess is a game that the great British public do not understand, so it must be presented to them by a reporter who is a chess illiterate. Can't play? Don't know a thing about the history of the game? That'll do nicely — the assignment's yours.

Chess the bleakest game? So says Jean Rafferty of the *Sunday Times*. I suppose radio must seem a pretty bleak medium to a deaf critic. Perhaps bleakness is always in the mind of the beholder. There are less subjective ways of evaluating the impact of a game, on both players and followers. What chess tournaments have required a police presence to inhibit violence and hooliganism? When have chess fans attacked each other or been trampled under foot?

Consider now the results at Montpellier. It was a tremendous success for the USSR. All 7 Russians finished in the top half of the table, ahead of Portisch, Seirawan, Short, Korchnoi and Ribli. The only non-Russians to finish on plus scores were Timman and Spassky (now permanently based in France). Why are the Russians always so strong? Because there is a strong chess culture in the USSR. Why? It is a fact of some interest that this is largely the result of a conscious political decision, taken in the 1930s, to provide government support for the mass diffusion and appreciation of an activity that would have no tendency to encourage drunkenness, vandalism and social disorder.

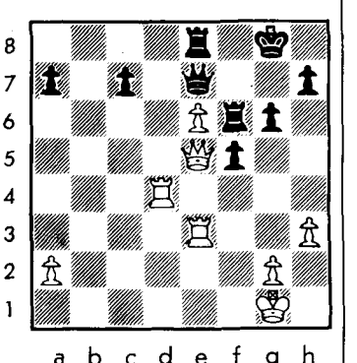
There is no occasion for either fear or hope of such social engineering in Britain. But we can ask for an end to the tiresome reiteration by the media of their stereotype of chess as an eccentric obsession. A good beginning would be to ridicule to extinction the idea that chess is not part of 'the real world'. In truth, it hardly amounts to an idea, but just a hack way of emphasising that the writer's subject is somehow strange, peculiar, or trivial. Funny place, this real world. Wherever you are, whatever you're doing, it's always somewhere else.

And so to a game in which a very strong GM falls into a trap that he really should have known:

Portisch-Ribli, Montpellier 1985. QGD Semi-Slav.
1. d4 Nf6 2. c4 e6 3. Nf3 d5 4. Nc3 c6 5. e3 Nbd7 6. Qc2 Bd6 7. b3 0-0 8. Be2 e5 It might be objectively better to play 8 . . . dxc4 and 9 . . .e5, to avoid an isolated d-pawn, **9. cxd5 Nxd5 10. Nxd5** Better 10. Bb2. **cxd5 11. dxe5 Nxe5 12. 0-0?** Castling into it. 12. Nd4 and 12. Bb2 are not as bad. **Nxf3 + 13. Bxf3 Qh4 14. h3** 14. g3 is no better: 14 . . . Qf6 15. Bxd5 Bf5! 16. Qd2 Be5 or 16. e4 Bh3 17. Rdl Be5!. **Bxh3! 15. Rdl Bh2 + 16. Kfl Qf6 17. Bxd5 Bf5 18. e4 Bg4 19. Ba3? Qa6 + 0-1.**

Problem

White to play. Is there a quick finish on?



Solution

Zuidema-Dieks, Holland 1981, ended **1. Rd7 Qxe6 2. Qd5! 1-0**. Pretty, but **1 . . . Qf8!** was a better defence, leaving the outcome less clear. Can anyone find a win for White after that?

George Botterill

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QUIZ

1) What is the relationship between the new Secretary of State for Trade and Industry and the previous MP for Southend West?
2) What is the relationship between the new Under Secretary of State for Transport and the current MP for Surrey South-West?
3) Which city was the birthplace of Dr Brian Mawhinney, the new Under Secretary at the Northern Ireland Office?
4) Which Head of State was awarded a gold medal by Interpol last week for his campaign against drug trafficking?
5) Which Head of State had lunch with Bob Geldof last week?
6) Which pop singer last week announced her engagement to a Norwegian shipping magnate who climbed Everest last year?
7) Which group of musicians won libel damages from *Private Eye* last week for allegations that they had been drunk?
8) From which charity did Cardinal Hume remove his patronage last week?

Answers

1) Son and father (Paul and 'Chips' Channon); 2) Husband and wife (Peter and Virginia Bottomley); 3) Belfast; 4) President Zia of Pakistan; 5) President Mitterrand; 6) Diana Ross; 7) London Symphony Orchestra; 8) Mencap.

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